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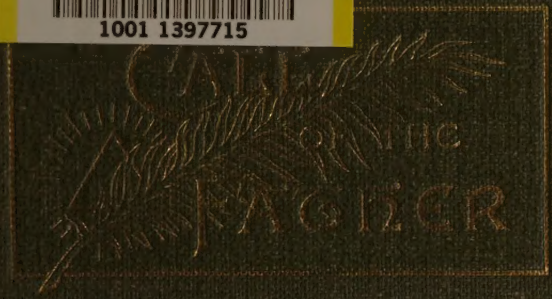

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The Call of the Father

By the
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Preface

LENT seems a fitting time for a bishop to make some special effort to help the souls committed to his charge, and it has been my custom for the last two or three years to make a tour through one part or other of the diocese of London and hold mission services of a simple character. The experiment was begun in West London two years ago, and we took as our motto for the Mission "JESUS of Nazareth passeth by." Last year I made another tour through North London, and the sermons, including the questions they evoked, and the answers which I did my best to give to the questions, are published under the title of "A Mission of the SPIRIT" —the work of the HOLY SPIRIT forming the basis of the teaching of the Mission. This year I have taken East London for the sphere of the Mission tour, and the subject has been the "Call of the FATHER." We have had large and reverent congregations at each service, and we have offered together many intercessions, the first half-hour of every service on the week-day evenings being spent in intercession for special cases for which our prayers were asked; questions have been freely asked; and the

following pages are a verbatim account of the sermons preached and the answers given to the various questions. No one is more conscious than I am myself of the difficulty of conducting a mission in this way; each week the missioner finds a new congregation, and instead of having the great help of being able, night after night, to repeat his message for GOD to the same people, and therefore carry on to the next service the warmth of the last, he has again and again to try, with GOD's help, "to melt the frozen, warm the chill." Hence arguments, appeals, warnings must be urged again, and this involves a certain repetition which could be avoided if the congregation was always the same. However, GOD is very good and blesses efforts, however inadequate, if offered Him simply and humbly, and there are many signs that He has blessed these Mission efforts.

An attempt has been made to sound the Call of the FATHER in an ordered sequence of thought. In the afternoons we have dwelt one by one on the attributes of GOD the FATHER: (1) His Holiness; (2) His Wisdom; (3) His Power; (4) His Patience; (5) His Energy; and (6) His Sacrifice.

On the evenings of the Sundays (in one case in the morning) we have seen how GOD speaks: (1) to us as His children; (2) to our conscience; (3) to our wills; (4) to our hearts; (5) to our bodies; (6) to our minds; and on the week-day evenings, after the intercessions have been offered and the questions answered, we have considered the response GOD's

child should make to the Call of the FATHER: (1) Trust; (2) Prayer; (3) Work; (4) Bible-reading; (5) Confirmation; (6) Holy Communion.

It would, of course, have been far more symmetrical to have printed the three courses separately, and put the questions together at the end, but it was felt that, as the sermon often led up to the question and the question itself formed the basis of the next sermon, it was better to let everything be printed exactly as it was spoken; and I can only pray that the printed words, which in however simple a way set forth "The Call of the FATHER," may have the blessing which in some cases was known to have followed them when they were spoken, and bring some wanderer Home.

A. F. LONDON.

FEAST OF ST. PHILIP AND
ST. JAMES, 1907.

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SHOREDITCH

SUNDAY MORNING

TO MEN ONLY

I

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

"With the clean thou shalt be clean."
PSALM xviii. 26 (Prayer-Book Version).

THERE is no doubt about it, that both within and without the Church the great lack to-day is a lack of the sense of sin; and, if you come to think of it, it is not altogether wonderful that it should be so. For there are many things which help to produce this. In the first place, thought moves in a kind of action and reaction, and there is what we call a reaction to-day from the teaching of our forefathers. I can remember myself, as a young man, being almost repelled by hearing human nature spoken of as if there was no good in it at all. That saying of the Old Testament about our righteousness being as "filthy rags" is perfectly true when we understand it, but it led to people speaking about men as if they had no good in them at all, and as if there was nothing loveable in human nature. And the

consequence was that, as a man looked round and saw what dear children he had — and I dare say many men think their children are the most precious things they have got—or as he looked into himself and found he was not wholly bad—not good, perhaps, but not wholly bad—a kind of reaction set in against that old language.

That is the first thing to which I trace this lack of the sense of sin which I see in the world to-day. Another thing has helped it on. Whether we are trained in it or not, we cannot help being keen about science and knowledge; we get caught with the excitement of finding out some new thing. Here we are to-day, with telephone, telegraph, motor-cars, and what not, things we never dreamed of years ago; I feel it myself a kind of excitement to live in the world to-day. What new thing we shall hear of to-morrow we do not know; and that is what makes a leading scientific man say, "Men do not worry about their sins to-day; they want to be up and doing." I have no doubt that the feeling that "we cannot worry about our sins, but that we want to be up and doing," accounts to a large extent for that lack of the sense of sin in our generation.

And then there is another cause, perhaps the greatest cause of all. There is a teaching to-day and a theology which, although it has come to the surface only recently, has been current for a long time underneath in some circles even of Christian thought, which identifies God with His world. I was speaking lately to one young man who said what a relief it was to identify God with His world, to think of God as always close to us, that He is light, that He is power. I said to him "Why, my brother, I have believed that all my life in one sense"; but he clearly meant it

in another. And when you find people who say, "You are a CHRIST," "we are all gods," or when you find them merging GOD in a kind of vague nebulous essence which pervades the world, then I say I do not wonder that they have lost their sense of sin. I feel that the moment I cease to believe in a living Person "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," before Whom I must give an account one day, before Whom I am giving an account every day of my life, Who knows what I do, sees what I do, and hears what I say—in other words, the moment I lose my sense of GOD—I lose my sense of sin. I may be speaking to some who are caught by this modern theology, and I say to you, in exact proportion as you identify GOD with the laws of the universe and cease to believe in a real living Person, in that proportion do you lose your sense of sin.

And yet, if we had only ears to hear, there have been other voices all this time sounding which ought to have told us something truer than this. We have always had the Old Testament; and we must never think the Old Testament out of date. The Old Testament has a message for to-day as much as it has had for any generation, and we cannot afford to do without it. And that message is the personality and the holiness of GOD. I have chosen the opening verse for this East End Mission from the Old Testament on purpose—"With the clean thou shalt be clean." And, when we are asked what is the meaning of the many chapters about clean and unclean, about purification, about all the care men had to take in the old days in approaching GOD, we find that it is this truth, this old truth, sounding in our ears, "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." If we are

going to give up that old reverence, if we are going to profess some philosophy which takes away that sense of reverence, we have gone downhill rather than the other way. The late Mr. Spurgeon used to say, "Beware of the down-grade movement." We have got to beware of it. The Old Testament, that old voice of the past, ought to be one of those things moving us to the sense of sin. And that old voice of the past is reinforced by a present voice also to-day. What strikes me as so inconsistent is this, that whereas some of our modern scientific men say, "Do not worry about your sins," yet if you ask the latest discoverer in science (for instance, in surgery) what is of the first importance to successful surgery, what does he tell us? Absolute cleanness. Do not worry about your sins, your surgical sins, in the hospital! Why, if there is a taint on that instrument, we do not know what the result may be. It was not worrying about sins in surgery which led to so many deaths in the last generation. Why did the man die after the operation? Why did the woman die after child-birth? Because the instrument that was used was not clean. And to-day you cannot take too much care lest a germ gets into the open wound, lest a tiny bit of dirt should get on the instrument, for it may be a question of life and death. The anti-septic treatment is the latest discovery of medical science, and it seems to me inconsistent from any rational point of view that you are to be most careful about your sins in medical science, but never mind them in moral science; you are to exclude the least germ or speck from the open wound of the body, but never mind the open wound of the soul. If there is a voice which speaks more loudly than another it is this voice of surgery to-day, "With the clean thou

shalt be clean." If every speck matters, every thought matters, the weak spot in the soul must not be contaminated, or else it may be a matter of life and death, as it would be in the case of an open wound in a hospital.

And, if that voice comes from the present, what about the voice from the future? I always feel that a mission is charged with reality. I could no more tell a lie, or say a word I did not believe, in a mission than I could do so in talking with the dying. There is nothing that helps so much to make men real as ministering to the dying, as the clergy do every day of their lives. And this voice from the future is the most sobering voice of all. Where are we going to when we die? We all know that we shall die. I could not pass down here to-day without seeing on the placards the announcement of the death of some one I knew. Down here in the East End of London the funerals used to pour down the streets at certain times, and it has often been said, as a matter of figures, that somebody dies in London every eight minutes, day and night. Where are we going to when we die? A man says, "Well, I hope I am going to Heaven." But remember the description of Heaven in the Bible. "There shall enter into it nothing that defileth or maketh a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life." And the great law of Heaven, the law written over its portals, is, "With the clean thou shalt be clean." We cannot enter Heaven—that is the point—unless we are able to live with the pure and the clean, and the innocent, and the good. It is not a question of God's will so much as of His character. With the clean we must be clean, and to take a man from his lusts, from his bad life, even from his careless, pagan

life, and put him into Heaven, would spoil Heaven, and make the man himself unhappy in Heaven. The goodness, and the purity, and the cleanness would be an impossible atmosphere for him.

Therefore it is that I ask this first question of the Mission; and that is, "Have we thought over what the end is to be—have we thought over at what in our lives we are aiming?" After all, we cannot be many years here—what is the end to be? And think when we look at it, and remember what the standard of Heaven is, we shall understand some things in religion which we should not understand without it. For instance, we understand the necessity for the Atonement. I have many questions asked me at all times; and I would say to-day that, just as in North London last year, I am ready to try and answer, once a week, every question that may be sent me during the week after these addresses, because I want this Mission to co-operate with you in all your thoughts and your difficulties and your perplexities, as for instance about the Atonement, about God, about Heaven. Now one of the questions often asked me is this, "Why cannot God forgive straight off? Why cannot God forgive without any Atonement at all?" I answer that question by asking another. My brother, why cannot the judge let off the criminal in the dock the moment he says he is sorry? Why does not the King make a proclamation that there shall be no prosecutions for crime in his dominion? You know the answer. If he did, then down would go with a great crash the morality of England. If there was no prosecution for crime, if the prisoner was let off, down would go the moral standard, and the happiness of your home, and of your children. The answer is the same with regard to God. If God

was to let off the sinner without the holy law of cleanness being respected, unless the law was kept in His kingdom, down would go the morality of the empire of GOD throughout the whole world.

And I thank GOD for His judgment as well as for His mercy. I have heard one or two stories lately which I must say have stirred my blood with righteous indignation. There was one poor girl up here in the City, earning her bread in one of the restaurants, the good daughter of a poor widow. A rich man, who had his luncheon every day at that restaurant, lured her from the path of virtue, and, when the poor child, finding what the result was going to be, went to the steps of his office—not to his home, not trying to make mischief, as it were, but simply demanding justice and saying, "Will you stand by me in my coming trial?"—he spurned her from the door—"What is that to me?" And if one of our nurses, poor herself, had not found that poor child sobbing her life out in a garret, with no coal and no food this cold weather, she would have died of starvation and cold. I thank GOD that there is a GOD of judgment when I hear a story like that. The man will escape *us*, but he will not escape GOD, Whose ear is ever listening for the cry of the miserable. GOD heard that girl's sob, and GOD, Whose eye marks everything, saw that man's misdeeds, and if he escapes all of us, as he probably will, there is still a GOD, and I thank GOD that there is a GOD in Heaven. We say sometimes, "Where is the GOD of the fatherless, and Who defendeth the cause of the widow?" But unless GOD is a holy GOD, we cannot answer, "It is GOD in His holy habitation"; we must answer, "There is no GOD of the fatherless."

And therefore I say that there must be a Gospel

of the wrath of GOD as well as a Gospel of the love of GOD. I may be speaking to some who know perfectly well to-day that they are not obeying the law, "With the clean thou shalt be clean"—that in their own personal lives, by themselves, or perhaps with others, they are breaking GOD's law of purity. They think that there is no one who knows their homes are unhappy, and that they themselves in their heart of hearts are miserable. I say think to-day of the holy GOD, do not go blundering on, not realising Who it is before Whom you must give an account. The angel stood before Balaam when he was blundering to his ruin with a drawn sword in his hand, and this Mission comes to you like the angel with the drawn sword in mercy. I preach to you the justice of GOD. GOD will not let you trample the innocent under foot; He will not let you go on breaking down your own purity of thought and heart. "With the clean thou must be clean, and with the holy thou must be holy." You are not happy. You remember perhaps with a great longing the purity and the innocence of boyhood. The very sight of those ten boys* with their clear voices singing those beautiful anthems brought back the memory of how pure and innocent you once were. I come to say that it is not too late. If you had known the numbers who have come to me in these last ten years—men like yourselves—and poured out their sorrow in my room, and have gone back believing that they were forgiven, to live a man's life again—you would not say it was too late for yourself. I know nothing about you personally, I do not know to

* The boys of the Chapel Royal were allowed to come down and sing two opening anthems, but retired before the sermon was preached.

whom I am preaching, but I see the angel with the drawn sword. Listen to God's Word before it is too late. And then comes in the Atonement. Somebody must have satisfied the broken law, and what we believe is that Jesus Christ, sent from Heaven, came down, knowing that not one of us had fully kept the law of cleanness and purity, that it must be kept by some one. He Himself perfectly kept it, and what we read in the New Testament is the perfect fulfilment of the law of holiness and purity, and the glorious Gospel committed to our charge to preach is this—that we may all have, if we are penitent, peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. I could not stand up in the pulpit—I could not possibly go through Shoreditch, Hackney, Bethnal Green, Spitalfields, Whitechapel, Stepney, Bow, Poplar—if I did not believe this Gospel of the grace of God; if I did not believe that after we had knelt down and faced what our sin was, and had confessed it, that this miracle had been worked for us, and we could be forgiven for Jesus Christ's sake.

And that brings me to the second question. When I have once understood how holy Heaven is, then I understand to some extent the meaning of the Incarnation. It is a tremendous thing we are asked to believe. My own faith staggered under it at first—that upon this little planet, one planet going round one sun out of twenty millions, the Eternal Son of God came to live and die. And I feel certain that I am all the better to-day for having faced how great the thing was. But the surprising thing is how many of us live as if it were the most ordinary thing in the world, and even preach it as if it were a commonplace. It should be really a standing miracle to us every day of our lives. It may be that this is the

only world on which there is life—as held by the author of "Man's Place in the Universe," or it may be that the old fathers were right and that this is the lost world among all the worlds. They used to talk of the earth as the lost sheep which the Good Shepherd had come down to find. Whether one is right or the other matters little. This is the point: we were so unfit for holy Heaven, it was so impossible for one of us, impure and fallen as we are, to live in that holy place, that the Eternal GOD came down to live and die that we might go there. And I look in your faces and ask you, for the second time, What are you waiting for, you—if there be such—who esteem all this an idle tale, you who are wondering perhaps when the service will be over, you who have come partly out of curiosity? Are you waiting for another Agony and Bloody Sweat, are you waiting for another Incarnation, another death on the Cross? You will never have it—never. But one day you will appear before JESUS CHRIST with the marks in His hands and His feet of what He has done, and He will say, "How did My death affect you?" GOD grant that you will not have to say, "I forgot." I believe it would be ten times better to have to say, "Oh, my LORD, I could not believe it; it was too great," than to say, "Oh yes, I believed it, but I forgot." It must, if we believe it, mean a change of life, it must mean prayer every morning, it must mean seeking to wash our robes and make them clean, it must mean looking into our heart to see that unclean things are not left there, it must mean church or worship of some sort on a Sunday, it must mean keeping the robes washed in the blood of the LAMB, that we may walk in white some day among the good and the pure.

And that brings me to my last point, and that is that

this truth explains the system of the Church. I speak to some who are Churchmen now, and some who are not; I am very glad to see here any that are not. But in any case, everybody knows what we call the system of the Church; Lent before Easter, Advent before Christmas, confession of sin before we pray, self-examination services held in church, and a Litany of Penitence. All these things have been in some form or other in the Church from the beginning, and I agree that it is all strange, all exaggerated, all unreal, unless we are sinners. If we are not sinners, then I cannot defend the system of the Church. The system of the Church has proved itself through the ages a sound schooling for sinners in purity and goodness, and the Church exists from end to end of East London to turn the unclean into the clean.

And therefore I come to my last question, "Are you Churchmen? Do you enter into the whole system of this life-saving, purifying society?" We simply live down here—I speak on behalf of the whole Church of East London—to try and help you. The Church Life is like a beautiful stream flowing through the district to cleanse off the stains and to help the impure to become pure. Do you remember what Charles Kingsley said about the stream in the "Song of the Stream"?

> Undefiled for the undefiled,
> Play by me, bathe in me,
> Mother and child.

That is just what it seems to me the Church says as it goes on with its daily life in East London,

> Undefiled for the undefiled,
> Play by me, bathe in me,
> Mother and child.

Wash off the sin at the Font, come and receive the cleansing power of the HOLY SPIRIT in Confirmation, come further and become partakers of the divine nature in Holy Communion. Again and again wash off your sins in Confession, take the Absolution with the hand of faith. Like a beautiful crystal stream that flows from the throne of GOD, so the Church of CHRIST streams through your midst. Are you a Churchman? What are you doing for others? We have the Church of England Men's Society; there are three branches already in Shoreditch, but I want to see a branch of the Church of England Men's Society in every parish, because it preaches this truth to us, that if we are Churchmen we must be workers. We are responsible for one another. We have got to stand by our brothers, and work, work, work while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.

I plead, then, with you to-day, "With the clean thou shalt be clean." Bishops, priests, people, it is the same law that binds us all, it is the same standard for everybody. Let us then realise in what cleanness consists, and how difficult, in this impure, dangerous world, it is to be clean. Let us use the means of purity, the means of grace—prayer, Church, Communion, Bible reading; let us keep in touch with the cleansing, crystal stream from Heaven, and GOD help us that, when this life is over, we may be among those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the LAMB!

SHOREDITCH

SUNDAY EVENING

II

THE CALL OF THE FATHER

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty."—2 CORINTHIANS vi. 17, 18.

I HAVE spoken of the holiness of Heaven. "With the clean thou must be clean." Into that city can enter nothing that defileth or maketh a lie, but only those written in the LAMB's Book of Life. But my message now goes further, and I come to the central message of the Mission. This Mission is to be called "The Call of the FATHER." We have had "JESUS of Nazareth passeth by" in West London in 1905, and "The Mission of the SPIRIT" all through North London in 1906, but the message of this Lent to East London is to be "The Call of the FATHER." The FATHER Who lives in that pure home does not leave us to find our way to it, but He comes round and calls us to it, and as I go from parish to parish of East London, as your father in GOD, I only go to

repeat the call of the FATHER, "Come out from the unclean thing, and I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty." And as I start upon this long journey, I know I can do nothing whatever myself, I know that no word that I can speak can of itself touch your hearts, and I only come because, after prayer to the HOLY SPIRIT, with this message put into my heart by GOD, I believe that GOD will take my words and that He will pierce through what you might almost call our hardened apathy, and that He will speak a word now to this one, now to that one who is wandering far from the home, and by His power and by His love bring them back. And this particular invitation which I have chosen for the message of the Mission seems to me to express more beautifully than any other passage the call of the FATHER, "Come out from the unclean thing, and I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty."

Now the first thing is to realise what we were meant to be to GOD, what being sons and daughters of GOD means. I will recall to you what I think is one of the most beautiful expressions of a mother's yearning love over her son. I remember quoting it at the great service at the conclusion of the peace after the South African war, and as I read the lines I could see old veterans with the tears standing in their eyes, and sometimes coursing down their cheeks, as they thought of some dear son who was gone :—

Oh bitter wind towards the sunset blowing,
What of the Dales to-night?
In yonder great old hall what fires are glowing,
What ring of festal light?

"In the great window, as the day was dwindling,
I saw an old man stand,
His head was proudly held and his eye kindling,
But the list shook in his hand."

Oh wind of twilight, was there no word uttered,
No sound of joy or wail?
"A great fight and a good death," he muttered,
"Trust him, he would not fail."

What of the chamber dark where she was lying,
For whom all life is done?
"Within her heart she rocks a dead child, crying,
'My son! My little son!'" *

Perhaps some of you know what that means, perhaps some of you know what the yearning mother's love for a little son is; and I quote it to try and bring home to you what the yearning love of GOD is. GOD has been said to be a father with a mother's heart, and what we have to remember (oh! let the HOLY SPIRIT try to bring it home to us!) is, that just as a little son nestles up to his mother, tells all his troubles, feels a comfort in her presence when he is quite a little fellow, holding on to her gown, almost afraid to leave go, so we, with a trustful love something like that, ought to nestle up to GOD; and the mother's yearning love over her boy is something like the yearning love that GOD has for every one of us.

Or take another picture; take it from East End life. How well I remember, one Christmas Day, going into one of your homes, not half a mile from this church, where I found a blind man in terrible pain. I tried to see what I could do for him. I said to the wife, "What do you do when poor father has such terrible pains?" and she said, "Little Alice generally sings to

* Henry Newbolt.

him." I said, "Would little Alice sing this afternoon to him as the pain was so bad?" There stood up a little Church-taught child, the angel of the house, and sang :—

O give me Samuel's mind,
A meek, unwavering faith,
To Thee obedient and resigned
In life and death.
That I may read with childlike eyes
Things that are hidden to the wise.

And as she sang that, which she had learnt in the Sunday-school, in her clear, childish treble, down the blind man's cheeks coursed the tears, a look of beautiful happiness came into his face, and the lines of pain died away. A fortnight afterwards he was taken down from his cross, and passed from his pain and his blindness into the land of everlasting life, where there is no more pain or suffering; but even in Paradise he will hardly hear a sweeter sound than he heard from his little child on Christmas Day. Have you got, any of you, a little daughter like that? Do you know what it is to have a little bright child, the very light of your home? If so, do you love her, you, her father, with a passionate love? Does she love you? You love her to come and give you a kiss when you come home tired. That is something like the love that GOD desires from us, that is something like the yearning love He showers down upon us.

And therefore remember at the very beginning, to-night, this first thought—what it is to be the sons and daughters of GOD, what it is to live unto GOD, what it is to be never without the FATHER'S smile, what it is to live every day—that is what we are meant to do, however much we fail to attain to it—to live every

day not alone, any more than CHRIST was alone when He said, "I am not alone, because the FATHER is with Me"; to have no trouble which we cannot at once go and tell GOD, and to know that every day, though there are so many millions, He is looking down upon us, watching us, caring for us. "The very hairs of our head are all numbered." We each have the whole love of GOD attending to each of us because He is infinite, and there is no trial that can come down upon us that we may not cast upon our FATHER'S shoulders, "casting our care upon Him, for He careth for us." I may be speaking to some who have come to-night to church for the first time for months or years, but yet I say that such a life is the life which every single man and woman and child in Shoreditch was meant to live.

And that brings me to the second point. GOD is not content without our trustful love in return. He is not content. He made many beautiful things in His creation; He made the stars, He made the earth, He painted the beauties of Nature, He made the angels, but even the angels do not content Him. What He thirsted for, what He longs to have, what He created men and women for was this, that He might have the trustful love of children. Perhaps some of us know what it is to long for the love of a child. We need not be ashamed of it; the instinct of fatherhood is GOD'S instinct. And therefore the whole story of the Mission, with its message, "The call of the FATHER," is that GOD in Heaven, almighty, all-powerful, in Whom is no darkness at all, has this great longing for a child's love, and that He is not content while a single one of the children Whom He made to love Him, and in Whom He placed the power to love Him, does not love Him; He is not content till He has the love of that one. "I miss my little

human praise"—that is what, in a famous poem, GOD said when the little cobbler boy ceased to praise Him in the morning. One might have thought one cobbler boy among all the host in Heaven and earth would not matter, but as God listened He said, "I miss my little human praise." Because one lad who used to praise Him in the morning before he went to work, had stopped his praise, all creation's chorus, because of that boy, seemed to stop. And therefore my second point is that, whether or not you have been to church before to-night, and whatever your life has been, the ALMIGHTY craves your love, and that all the bright angels, and all the song of the stars as they move in their courses, and all the most beautiful music of the world, are nothing to GOD until He has the music of the love of your heart.

And then the third point is, at what tremendous cost did He try to win it back. I have spoken this afternoon of the great thing the Incarnation is. The belief that the Eternal SON of GOD came down to one planet going round one of the twenty millions of suns, lived here and died here is a beautiful thing, and I believe it with my whole soul, but what does it mean? It must have been for some great purpose. And what it meant was to win us back to give GOD that love which He longed to have. People sometimes say, "Well, why does not GOD force me to be good, if He wants me to be good?" Do you suppose it would be worth anything to GOD—forced love, forced obedience —even if He could have it? but He could not have it without breaking the most precious thing He has given us. If GOD was to come down, and, as it were, stand in the middle of Shoreditch, and by an almighty exercise of His power make the people who blaspheme Him now and neglect Him turn towards Him, He would break

His own image in which He made us, the free will in man. I dare say I shall have some questions about that. During the Mission in North London how many questions were sent to me about free will! But it all comes down to this: we cannot have it both ways—either we are made puppets and are pulled by wires, and we have no life and freedom in us, or we are free children of GOD and are free to go wrong; and you can go away to-night and say, "I will have nothing to do with GOD," or you can say, "I will come back to GOD." You are perfectly free to say that, and it is only because you are free that your saying this is worth anything. If you were not free, you would be a slave and not a son. And the third great truth is that the Eternal SON of GOD—so yearning was the love of the FATHER—came down to live on earth to bring us back to love GOD.

And that brings me to the fourth truth, which is—and I say it perfectly deliberately—that only those who love GOD are happy. I have seen a good deal of East London life—I did not live down here for nine years for nothing—and after nine years of East London I say perfectly deliberately that only those who love GOD are happy. I used to go many a time into two homes side by side. One man had the same wages as the other, the same number of children. I find one home the ante-room of Heaven, and the other home the ante-room of hell. And what makes the difference? Not that one is richer than the other, not that the walls of the houses are the least different one from the other; but the difference is that one home is full of the love of GOD and therefore the love of man, while the other home is not. One home is serving GOD: the children love the father and the mother, the

father and the mother love the children, there are God's laws governing the home, the man does not drink, he brings his wages home to his wife, the children are well clothed, well fed, there is no bad language heard there, there is no gambling, they go together to the house of God on Sunday, and there is no home in the whole of the world happier than an East End home when full of the love of God; whereas the other—you know better than I who speak to you what the other is like. Foul words are often heard in it: you can see by the look of the children when you enter what kind of laws govern the home. The husband drinks away his wages or gambles them away; there is no prayer there; God's name is only heard in oaths, and a look of misery pervades the place. Those who love God are happy and those who do not love God are miserable. And therefore my fourth truth to-night is that the old benedictions "Blessed" (or as it should be, "Happy") "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; happy are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy; happy are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; happy are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake"—pronounced by the Son of God, every year are shown to be true in East London life.

And that brings me, lastly, to this question—What is it that is spoiling the happiness of the sons and daughters of God? Is it pain? I have seen down here some children of God in extremity of pain bright with happiness; I have, within a mile of this very church, seen a little woman carried, after twenty-five years of pain, back to her home after her Christmas Communion with a joy on her face that the world can neither give nor take away. Pain

was shared by the Son of God. "He suffered more than I do" many a poor sufferer has said. Not pain, nor yet poverty. Poverty has been unable to break down happiness, hard as the struggle has been, if the love of God is there; with trust in God people have come out of their troubles. It is the unclean thing, it is the slime of the Evil One on the home; it is malice, it is drunkenness, it is selfishness, it is lust, it is sloth, it is the unclean thing which is fouling God's creation, and that is why it is that this message of the Mission is so true. "Come out from the unclean thing, and be ye separate," leave that bad company, leave the old friends, come back, "and I will receive you, and I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

What we have to face now is, first of all, Are we or are we not going to listen to that call? Secondly, What will happen if we do not? Thirdly, What are we to do if we are?

And, first, are we going to listen to the call? And I can imagine that the devil, who is sure to be active (nothing is more certain than that the moment God begins to work in a special way the Evil One instantly begins to try to spoil His work) —I can imagine he will suggest three objections. One is, "Why should I be any better than the man who lives in the same street with me? I am quite as good a fellow as he is. I am more popular with my friends; I do not drink as much as he; I do not use so much bad language. Why should I be any better than the other people who live in our street?" My answer is, "God has as yet not called them, the call has not reached them, and He *has* called you." You will never be able to say between now and the

Judgment Day that you have never heard the call of GOD. Looking down upon you with that same fatherly, motherly love of which I speak, He calls you to-night by name, and you can never say He has not. And therefore you have nothing whatever to do with that man down in the street; perhaps you are the very man He is going to send to save him presently. But here and now to you, to *you*, to *you* the call of the FATHER comes: "Come back, come out from the unclean thing, and I will be a Father to you and ye shall be My son; ye shall be My daughter."

Or perhaps the Evil One says in your heart, "Oh, it is too late, too late; you might have preached this message twenty years ago. You don't know, Bishop, what my life has been. It is twenty years since I said a prayer." It was forty in the case of one man, I remember, since he had said a prayer, and he became a monument of the Mission, he and his wife, steadfast and earnest Communicants until they died. Too late! It will be too late some day, but it is not too late now; the door of the home is still kept open and the FATHER'S voice still says, "Come and I will be a Father to you."

Or perhaps the devil says, "Oh, it is too much trouble; how I should be laughed at if I took to being a church-goer after all these years!" A man said to me once in Limehouse, while I was holding a Mission (he had been converted at some chapel), "Oh, the worst part, Mr. Ingram, was when I walked down the street with the minister, and all my old friends came out and looked at me." He said that was a crucifix. Yes, but is it not worth it? Is not this GOD of love worth something? Why, you ought to glory in being laughed at, you ought to glory,

after weeks and months and years of neglect, in suffering something for your FATHER; you ought to glory in your shame. And therefore do not refuse. Because what will happen if you do refuse it? Why, the awful thing is this: it may never come again. Over and over again it has been found that that chance never came again. I do not think chances do come again—not the same chances. And if, by the mercy of GOD, the call came again, it would find you more dead, more hardened, duller than you are to-night. And nothing can stop that.

But then what are you to do if you say, "I will come"? Think over where you are. "Adam, where art thou? Adam, where art thou?" That was the cry that rang through Eden to find Adam who had sinned. Where are we? Find out. Take those ten commandments one by one—you will find them in your Prayer Book, in your Bible; take them one by one. "Do I love GOD with all my heart and all my soul, do I worship Him, do I honour His Holy Name, do I carry out His love in my home with my father or mother or children or friends, do I use my influence to protect the souls of others? What about the boys who work alongside me in the shop? Do I indulge horrible thoughts and use bad language? Am I strictly honest? Do I gossip and say malicious things about my neighbours? Do I covet? Is my whole idea to get something for myself in the world?" See where you are. The HOLY SPIRIT will show you where you are. And then ask what you have not done. Have I prayed every day to this loving GOD? Have I nestled up to Him and trusted Him, have I stood up for His honour in the world, have I shown myself in His House of Prayer on Sunday, at any rate, and on week-days when I could? Have I come

to the gracious Feast He spreads before me, and, if so, how often? "Come, for all things are now ready," has been His invitation. How many times have I been for the children's bread? Those are the questions to ask, and I shall be much surprised if, as you ask them, there does not come back to your mind one of the most beautiful stories in the world, the story of the Prodigal Son. He came to himself, and he was afraid to go back, but he made up his mind that he would try. "I will be one of the hired servants," he said, and he went back. But before he reached his father's house his father ran out to him, welcomed him, received him, kissed him, put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and said, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." What I can promise you from GOD is that if one of you, if it is only one, makes up his mind to come from that far land, where he has been trying to satisfy himself with the swine's husks, back to the Father's home, the FATHER will have him back, will receive him with a father's welcome, will forgive him the whole of his past; and that, as they joy in Heaven, the FATHER Himself will say, "This My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

SHOREDITCH

FRIDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The first question is a very touching one, which is asked in a very reverent spirit, and which very likely has been in many minds. All must have read with horror the confession of the murder of Miss Lake in the wood near Essen, in Germany; the confession of the three men who murdered her adds to the brutality of the crime. The inquirer asks:—

Where was the loving, great Almighty FATHER'S care over Miss Lake?

She was a good girl, and a zealous Church worker. Without a miracle many things might have been done to prevent that crime. The poor girl might have heeded the warning not to go alone through the wood which she received, or at least one of the three men might have been shamed into chivalry by the revolting idea of three strong young men attacking a poor defenceless woman. "No influence or power of any kind seemed to protect her against such an awful fate," and so on.

I am glad that question was asked, because I believe as a matter of fact that it is occurrences like this which make more atheists than anything. How many as they listened to what we have tried to say about the loving FATHER may very

likely ask in their minds a question like that? What we must remember is this (and it really is the key to many difficulties), that when GOD created man He created him with a free will. We used to argue down in Bethnal Green very often on Sunday afternoon whether we would rather that GOD had not done so. There was a strong set who argued that we had much better have been made like clocks, bound to go right; but as a rule the men of the district decided that they would rather be men of free will, able to go right or able to go wrong, rather than mere puppets to be pulled by a wire. Now if, as I believe and as has been the belief of the Church all through, GOD made men with free will, then, if they are free to do what is right, they must be free to do what is wrong, and to that extent GOD parted with His omnipotence. That is to say, if we were to be free, GOD must leave us free agents; and if three young men choose to sell themselves to the devil, if they choose to take the devil, with all his ideas of lust and cruelty, to inspire them, GOD will not work a miracle to crush their free will. If He stretched out His almighty arm to crush their free will, or your free will or my free will, when we are about to do a wrong action, He would break His own image in us. Therefore it is that, as the Bible says, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." Our SAVIOUR said, "Let both grow together—the tares and the wheat—till the harvest." And therefore the first fact to be faced is that a crime like this, if three young men are devilish enough to plan it, is carried out over and over again; it happens in London—something of the sort—I suppose every night. Now that is the first point. Then for the second: if you say, "How unjust that is!" you must remember that we are never told that justice is going to be established in this fallen world in Time. One of the reasons why I was pleading on Sunday afternoon to the large gathering here for a just GOD, and that GOD must be a GOD of justice, is because when we ask the question, "Where is the GOD of the fatherless, Who defendeth the cause of the widow?" we shall no longer be

able to answer, "It is GOD in His holy habitation," unless there is a day of judgment, unless GOD is just, unless, however long it takes in coming, justice reaches the criminal and the wicked at last, always supposing they do not repent, and unless there is a strong, loving FATHER waiting to reward that poor, ill-used, innocent girl with an eternity of Heaven and an eternity of happiness and an eternity of love in another and a better world. If you look in the Bible you will find it is never promised that, in this little moment of time that we call our life on earth, a mere second compared to the deathless æons of eternity, we are going to see everything righted now. This is one of those facts which necessitate a Day of Judgment. That is the second point. Then the third is that GOD was there with His child. There is nothing wicked but a wicked will; and even if they had been able —which they were not, as a matter of fact—to make that poor child of GOD do a wicked thing, it would not have been wicked. GOD was there with His almighty power, and it was He Who took her, the real person, the real living child whom He loved, to the fathomless depth of His love for ever. Do you not remember that when a surgeon in one of our hospitals tried to save a child's life from diphtheria, by sucking the poison, and died as well as the child, every one said, "What a wicked waste of life!" But there was a little poem in the *Spectator* that week which I have never forgotten. What the world saw was two dead bodies, a young man and a child lying down there in the hospital mortuary; but the angels saw "a young man enter perfect life, and in his arms a little living child." And then, fourthly, and this to my mind is the key of the whole thing, CHRIST died like that. It is quite true that the death of an innocent girl appeals to us more than anything else in the world, and every honest man's blood boils within him as he thinks of the ruthless, dastardly act of those three young men; but at the same time CHRIST Himself was done to death, the innocent Who did no sin, neither was there guile found in His mouth. And yet He was bloodily done to death on

the Cross on Good Friday, the Eternal Son of God Himself. And if you are going to argue, or—for God only knows how much we have to think these things out ourselves—if *we* are going to argue that no innocent person is to be done to death, then we must say it was wrong for Jesus Christ to be done to death. Had God forgotten Jesus Christ, His Eternal Son? Why, over the Cross there was ever sounding, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." This is one of the reasons that no new theology can take the place of the old Gospel, for the whole point is that it was God Who did it, it was God Who suffered, it was God Who came into this suffering world and shared our suffering. I could not love some rose-crowned Apollo who never dipped his finger in the world's anguish, but I can follow a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And I know full well that God did not cease to love or care for or protect His child who was done to death, because He did not desert or cease to love His Eternal Son when He was done to death, and that therefore He says of both, "This is My beloved child in whom I am well pleased." And He says to us, "If you believe in the Cross you will see that I have borne the worst with you, I have suffered with you, like a general, I have shared the hard campaign with you."

Take it on trust a little while,
Soon ye shall read the mystery right
In the full sunshine of His smile.

2. The next question is on the immanence of God.

It is evidently from some one who has been reading in the daily papers about what is called "The New Theology," which is after all a very old heresy.

I hardly expected that the word "immanence" would be at all used or possibly understood by one who was here on Sunday night, but I can answer this question much more shortly than the other. The teaching which identifies God with His world and everything in it is an immoral teaching, because,

as the writer so truly says, GOD in that case must be sin.* The element of truth is, that there is a touch of divinity about everything GOD has made. Everything was made by GOD, "and behold it was very good," but the sin in the world and the perversion of what once was good is the handiwork of the devil on GOD's creation. That is what is taught in the parable of the Tares. When the householder came and saw the tares among the wheat, he said, "An enemy hath done this." So we see in GOD's creation the marks of His great enemy. What, then, is the true immanence of GOD, which means the indwelling of GOD? Simply that beautiful truth which we made the keynote from parish to parish in the North London Mission, that GOD the HOLY SPIRIT dwells in us, and will dwell in us more and more. It is the good who are indwelt by the HOLY SPIRIT; GOD is immanent in them, He dwells in them. You remember that beautiful prayer of St. Paul for his people, "that CHRIST may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge." That is my prayer for you, that you may have the true immanence of GOD, and that all of us may shine more and more with the indwelling light and power of GOD the HOLY GHOST.

3. What is the explanation of "descending into hell"? and do the righteous and the unrighteous, before taking their final state of happiness or misery, enter the same place?

First of all, with regard to hell, just a word to explain this, which is much misunderstood. When it is said that CHRIST "descended into hell," it does not mean that He went down into the place of lost spirits, but that He went into the unseen world, and as far as I can understand—I

* I need hardly say that this is not the teaching of the book entitled "The New Theology," which is referred to in a later sermon.

never dogmatise about these things, I only say as far as I can understand—there seems to be a place of waiting souls of two descriptions, one, as it were, the ante-room to Heaven and one the ante-room to hell. For instance, take that picture of Dives and Lazarus. It is clear that Lazarus was not in Heaven, because the Judgment Day had not yet come. He was in what is called "Abraham's bosom," which is otherwise described as "Paradise." On the other hand, it is clear that Dives was not in a place in which there was no influence upon him to improve him or teach him, for Dives clearly was growing in good ideas when he began to think of his brethren. And therefore, as far as we can understand, Heaven and hell are states or places which come after the great Day of Judgment, and besides them in this unseen world there seems a "gulf fixed" between the two ante-rooms; waiting souls are not in the same place, but one in one place and one in another. And therefore when I hear St. Paul say, "It is better to depart and be with CHRIST—far better"; when I hear our LORD say to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," my belief is that He is promising a place in that happy waiting place of souls where He Himself is: where souls grow in grace every day, become more Christlike, and are preparing for the glorious life with the holy and the blessed and the angels in Heaven at last.

4. If GOD fore-knows and fore-ordains, can prayer make any difference?

GOD fore-knows and fore-ordains subject to certain things which may or may not happen. You remember that it is said of JESUS CHRIST, that "He did no mighty works" in a certain place "because of their unbelief." He was full of power and love, but there was no response at all, and He could not do them. There was perfect power and love in Him, but He could not do what He wanted to do. I find a parallel in some young man who is sent by his father to an old friend's office in the city. The old friend is most

anxious to bring on the father's son, but the boy comes down unpunctually to the office, there is trouble over his figures; the old friend cannot get him on because there is no response on the part of the boy. Now that is exactly what happens to the sons and daughters of GOD. "Come out from the unclean thing, and I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty." But supposing they do not come, supposing there is no response, GOD cannot bring them on because they have free will, and what we believe prayer to be is a response of faith. The man or woman who prays receives strength and grace, and GOD can bring them on; He gives them grace for grace; and as we pray for ourselves and pray for others our prayer for others helps GOD's work for them. And therefore GOD would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, but at the same time He is hampered in His work (because we are men and women with free will) by the amount we respond or do not respond to what He does.

5. Ought not the imprecatory Psalms to be withdrawn from regular use by Christian congregations?

I think it is quite a question whether they ought not. I think they are often misunderstood. Personally I find no difficulty in using them, because I think I understand in what spirit they were written. Even GOD can only get out of any age the morality of which that age is capable, and the cursing Psalms belong to a certain state of morality out of which, please GOD, we have already, in Christian atmosphere, grown. But the good element which they embody is a desire for a kingdom of righteousness. The man who wrote them was mad for the righteousness of GOD. GOD's enemies are his enemies, and he was full of a desire that GOD's justice should be shown. He called down the curse, as it were, upon the common enemy of GOD and man in a way which was quite natural in that state of morality, and when I use these cursing Psalms I read them in the light of the ideas of the times in which they were written.

6. Can the reading and study of the Old Testament, with its incomplete revelation of GOD, be of real value to Christians?

You cannot do without the Old Testament; you cannot understand the New Testament without it. When you come to quote "Blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the merciful," it takes for granted that strong, manly righteous character which the Old Testament has taught, and as it were the two together make up the perfect character of the Christian man. I cannot dwell more on that, but I am certain that, perhaps more than anything else to-day, we want the Old Testament. I remember in a mission a man saying to me once, "Oh! I quite understand, Bishop"—it was at the end of a mission sermon which he had heard some one preach—"the more a man sins the better GOD likes him." That is what he carried away from the parable of the Lost Sheep in the New Testament, whereas here is the Old Testament teaching that "with the clean thou shalt be clean"; and it is not until we know ourselves sinners that we want a Saviour, and therefore the Old Testament is much needed to-day.

7. Is it not grossly revolting to speak of being washed in a fountain of blood? Would not our cleansing be just the same if JESUS CHRIST had suffered some different form of death, and none of the blood had been spilt?

It is quite natural perhaps to ask that, but you must remember that "the blood is the life," and the Atonement is not finished until the blood is sprinkled on the altar behind the veil. And that is why we ought to keep Ascension Day as one of the greatest days in the Church. It is sometimes neglected even now. Only then does the High Priest take the blood and sprinkle it on the great Mercy Seat on high. That is the reason why so much is said about the blood in the New Testament.*

* See Bishop Westcott on this point, "The Epistles of St. John."

SHOREDITCH

FRIDAY EVENING

III

TRUST

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."
1 PETER v. 7.

I HAVE tried, GOD helping me, to ring "The Call of the FATHER" in your ears: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty." And I have tried to bring home to myself and to you what it means to be a son and a daughter of GOD. I asked you to think and pray about it, and I do think that I have got myself, by thinking and praying every day about it since Sunday, a better conviction of what it means. It is one of those things which alone the HOLY SPIRIT can bring home; He cries "Abba, Father" in our hearts, that is, He makes us feel that GOD is really a Father. But now comes the question, What is the response to be? And on the week-day evenings we shall fix our minds upon some one response each time, and then go home and dwell upon it.

Our text to-night is, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." This is the first result of hearing the FATHER's call. We pictured, you remember, the Prodigal Son coming home, we saw the father coming to meet him. And what was the first thing he did? He cast all his care upon his father, and he at once believed that the father cared for him.

Now just think of the number and of the different kinds of cares that there are here in this very church to-night. There is the care that we each of us have of our own individual soul. It is an awful thing, if you come to think of it, to be an immortal soul; it is an awful thing not to be able to die, if you want to. Five minutes after death we are just the same as five minutes before, and we have got the care of that immortal soul, the future of it and the destiny of it, and whether it does good or harm in this world. That is a care which no one can take from us. "Bear ye one another's burdens, but every man must bear his own *load*." If you knew Greek, you would know that the two words are different. We can bear one another's burdens, but you cannot take a man's load off him, his load of responsibility.

> Thy body at its best,
> How far can that project thy soul
> On its lone way?

One by one we are born, one by one we really live alone, and one by one we die. And there is the care of each man and each woman's immortal soul. That is one thing we have all got.

Then there are what we call family cares. What a worry some of you poor brothers and sisters of

mine, down in Shoreditch, have to make both ends meet always! There is the family of little children. Sometimes the man is out of work. I know what a time some of you East London sisters of mine have to get even a dinner for the family, besides perhaps not having made up for the out-of-work time which there was before; and the poor man —perhaps I am speaking to one who knows what it is—has had to tramp, tramp all day and come back at night and see the poor wife and children without proper food and clothing. That is a care if you like. One of you wrote to me describing that in the course of the week.

Then, again, there is the care which one has about others when one is very anxious for them. People often come to me at London House and say, "I wish, Bishop, you would see my brother," or "I wish you would see my husband," or "my friend." "I have been praying for them, and am so anxious about them." And there is not the slightest doubt that somebody here may have their greatest care to-night, not about themselves at all, but "Oh! if my boy could come back to GOD!" "Oh! if I were not so anxious about my sister!" "Oh! if it did not look as if my poor little child were going to die of consumption!" Care about others is another kind of care.

Then some of us have—and how true it sounds when one reads it in the New Testament—"besides those things which come upon me daily, the care of all the churches." That is what falls on me, so far as the London diocese is concerned, "the care of all the churches," and upon the parish priests here the care of their districts or their parishes.

And then think of the children—what care some of

our children have. When I see a poor little East End child carrying a baby, often almost as big as itself, I know how very early our children in East London have cares. The very child is acting like a little mother; the mother is out at work. Perhaps there is a tiny child, hardly seeming as if she can walk herself, looking after the baby. Therefore there is no question about it, we have all got plenty of cares here, and may have that worst care of all—the burden of unrepented sin.

Now the question to-night is—How is it possible, leaving out for the moment the burden of unrepented sin, and speaking of the other cares, how is it possible to cast all this care upon GOD? Is that a real thing to say? I hate anything in religion that is unreal. I would never say a thing in a sermon that I did not believe to be literally and absolutely true. There is a great deal too much unreality in religion, and I believe, because men are apt to think it is all a matter of words, words, words, they often do not accept religion. Now in what sense is it literally true when we hear that our cares can be cast upon GOD? It does not mean that we at once get rid of them. Do you not remember that poem of "The Changed Cross"? In it some one found his cross too heavy; he said he could not bear it any longer, and asked for another. He was brought different kinds of crosses. He took up one—that was too heavy. He took up another —it was impossible to bear that; and at last, when he had gone through them all, there he found his old cross again. He took it up again, the same, and yet changed, because then taken up in a different spirit. And I believe that what is meant by casting all your care upon GOD has been more beautifully expressed by Archbishop Trench in the

lines I am going to quote than in any other possible way :—

> Lord, what a change within us one short hour
> Spent in Thy Presence will prevail to make,
> What heavy burdens from our bosom take,
> What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!
> We kneel, and all around us seems to lower,
> We rise, and all the distant and the near
> Stand forth in sunny outline brave and clear
> We kneel, how weak ; we rise, how full of power!
> How is it that we do ourselves this wrong
> And others—that we are not always strong?—
> That we should ever weak and heartless be,
> Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
> And strength and hope and courage are with Thee.

That is what it means by casting all your care upon GOD. It does not mean that all the care of all the churches is going to be taken off me to-night. It does not mean necessarily that your boy will come back to GOD this evening. It does not mean that you will cease to have that burden of poverty and struggle for a time. But what it does mean is that GOD will put a strength within you, He will take that burden on His own shoulders, and when He takes it up you will hardly feel it is the same thing. That is what it means, and it is a literal truth that if day by day we say, "Oh FATHER, help me, take this care to-day, and give me the strength to bear it"—we take it up and we hardly feel it in the same way. And after all, is not that what you would expect? GOD is very strong, very strong indeed; you have the whole of GOD when you pray to GOD; I have the whole of GOD when I pray. And therefore GOD, Who only lets His children be troubled at all to bring them nearer to Him, sits as a refiner and a purifier of silver, and does not

let the fire be too hot. The moment the child comes with the burden, the FATHER puts His great loving shoulders under it and the child hardly feels the weight. I remember George Herbert, that sweet singer of the Church of England, in one of his poems describes that when GOD gave certain gifts to man, He left one which He did not give him, and that was rest.

> Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
> If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
> May toss Him to My breast.

And it may be, brother, that you did not think much about GOD when all was well with you. I have known hundreds who have been brought to GOD by their troubles, hundreds down in the London Hospital, who never thought of GOD till (for instance) they broke their legs in the docks, and it may be true of all of us that GOD has not given us rest from our troubles yet, so that "if goodness lead us not, yet weariness shall toss us to His breast."

And therefore, whatever it be, my message to you is, "Cast all your care upon GOD, for He cares for you." He will take away altogether the burden of repented sin, and it will drop off your back; as Pilgrim's burden dropped off in "The Pilgrim's Progress," and went down the abyss. If you confess your sin to GOD, if you leave it off to-night, if you ask to be pardoned for CHRIST'S sake, then that sin shall go right away from you and you shall never have it again. But remember to be forgiven means to strive against your sin. There is no reality in saying "I am saved" and going away and doing it again. It means a constant struggle against temptation, a constant struggle to be honest, a constant struggle to be God-fearing, with many

difficulties, and that is just the struggle in which GOD will help you. And if we, like simple, trusting children, bringing every burden, every care, cast them upon our FATHER to-night, we shall know the truth of the promise that "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint."

HACKNEY

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

TO MEN ONLY

IV

THE WISDOM OF GOD*

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"—ROMANS xi. 33.

MY theme this afternoon is the Wisdom of GOD. Notice first what stirred St. Paul in this Epistle to utter one of those rare exclamations or apostrophes, as we call them. I say rare because, though St. Paul was clearly warm-hearted and compassionate by nature, he kept himself in severe restraint, and seldom breaks out into such apostrophes as the one I have quoted for my text.

First, we will consider the working of the wisdom of GOD in history. To an ancient Jew it seemed almost incredible to believe that that race could be mistaken. St. Paul was brought up in the idea that

* Owing to mistaken information as to the time, the shorthand reporter was not present at this service, but this excellent summary of the sermon has been most kindly supplied by Mr. Tarran of the "Guardian" newspaper.

the Jews were the chosen race; and we know how fully for a time he believed that it was impossible that they could be wrong, and that One Whom the chosen race had rejected could be the Messiah, and with characteristic thoroughness he persecuted all who were "of this way, and haling men and women committed them to prison." But when Saul the persecutor became St. Paul—and the acknowledged historical fact that he did so converted one of the great Deists of the last generation—it is most interesting to see how he tried to reconcile his two beliefs: his old belief that the Jews were the chosen nation, and could not go wrong, and the new belief that JESUS CHRIST Whom the Jews had slain was the SON of GOD. When you take up your Bible—and I hope it is not, as it too often is, carefully sheltered from dust, and scarcely ever read—if you turn to Romans x. and xi., you will see how St. Paul reconciles his two beliefs. And it is when he has worked out this, as he does in such detail in these two chapters; when he sees that the branches had been broken off for a purpose to allow of the Gentiles being brought in and that the Jews would one day be "grafted into their own olive tree"; when he sees how GOD had planned this out so carefully, then it is that he bursts out into this exclamation: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

I. Now I do not pretend for a moment that the destiny of the Jewish race is of the same absorbing interest to us as it was to St. Paul; but it is a dull mind which takes no interest in it at all. And in illustrating the wisdom of GOD I am going to take history first, as St. Paul did. You will see what a

bearing this has on every man's life in Hackney. I will take two or three of what are called "the surprises of history." About four hundred years after JESUS CHRIST was here on earth the Goths burst down upon ancient Rome, and every one thought that the end of the world had come; that all civilisation was swept away. But what happened? The little despised Christian Church rose to the occasion and converted the conquerors of Rome. The vigorous life of Christian Europe is due to the conversion of the Goths, after they had burst upon Rome and swept away civilisation. What was regarded as a wholesale calamity was a blessing in disguise, and Europe is richer to-day for the influx of the wild tribes of the north.

Take another surprise of history. I dare say I am speaking to many who used to come and argue with me in Bethnal Green or Victoria Park. If so, there are some here who want convincing proof that there is a wise and righteous GOD. Sometimes we think it does not look as if there was. But is it not a matter of history that "righteousness exalteth a nation"? Why is it that every nation that has been righteous and kept its family life pure, that has looked after its children, that has not become luxurious and effete, that has retained the simple virtues of courage, patriotism, and self-reliance, has remained, whilst those which have become corrupt and have misused marriage have gone down? As Keble says in the "Christian Year":—

> One by one
> They tower and they are gone,
> Yet in the Prophet's soul the dreams of avarice stay.

Why should they do so unless behind history is a righteous and wise GOD, Who, though He hides Him-

self, slowly works out His righteous purpose in the world? How do you know the difference between right and wrong? The Power which implanted conscience must have been a righteous Power, or He never would have put the knowledge between right and wrong in His children's hearts at all.

Thirdly—and this will specially appeal to the Church of England Men's Society, which has done so much in Hackney—take the history of the Church. You really can make out a very plausible case in argument for confining the work of a national church to the nation. It might be argued that GOD's high order, "Go ye into all the world," was a counsel of perfection

> . . . far too high
> For mortal man beneath the sky.

For centuries the Church forgot GOD's command to preach the Gospel to every nation. What happened? When the Church forgot the command to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel," and confined itself to the English nation, the Church went down. During all those cold days of the eighteenth century the Church's power declined; since it has taken up the command, in exact proportion has the Church of England revived. I venture to say that Bethnal Green is a different place from what it was when your rector and I were working there eighteen years ago. The Church has revived throughout the whole of England, and why? Because it has believed in GOD's command. It has given of its best to fulfil GOD's high command, and with the renewed beating of a once palsied heart the Church of England is alive in England to-day. And as I watch this, I say with St. Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD! How unsearch-

able are His judgments, and His ways past finding out."

II. But though with St. Paul I begin with history, I will frankly say that the most striking evidence of the wisdom of God is to be found in Creation. When we look out some starry night and look into the heavens, do we not marvel at the picture we see? It has been well said that "Nature not only works like a machine, but sleeps like a picture." Whilst you are sitting so quietly and calmly in this church this afternoon, do you forget that the planet on which you are living is scudding along at the rate of nineteen miles a minute? and that all creation is held in the hollow of God's hand? It is an astronomer who tells us that when he was watching an eclipse of the sun, a workman, also watching, at first somewhat incredulously, called to his mate, "Come and see the most wonderful piece of engineering that I have ever seen." The perfect poising of the earth, near enough to yet not too near the sun, the seventy miles of atmosphere, and the control of twenty millions of blazing bodies—is a wonderful instance of the power and wisdom of God. Whilst He controls the great armies of the sky, He paints the little wayside flower and fashions the smallest shell on the sea shore. When we reflect on the surprise and the beauty of it all and how great is the mind of God, we must be crassly stupid if we do not utter the exclamation of St. Paul.

III. And when I pass from nature to human nature the wonder is greater still. On any hypothesis of creation man is the crown of it, and there is nothing whatever in a belief in a gradual evolution of design to make impossible or unnecessary the existence of a Designer. Just think for a moment of the rich

variety of human nature. Have you realised that no man or woman is the same as any other in the world to-day, and no man or woman that has ever lived is exactly like any other man or woman? I suppose you know that, according to the last discovery, the thumb-mark of every individual in the world is different from all others. Think of the mind, heart, conscience, will, apart from the body, which make up the life of man. Every single man is a separate idea of GOD. When I think what a mind GOD must have—that He has planned out for every single person his life, that He is working out His purposes amidst the clashing of multitudes of conflicting human wills, then I say—"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD!"

IV. Now this has a bearing on the life of every one.

(1) It has an immediate bearing on what is called the moral question. There is no doubt that to-day there is a real and united effort to blur the distinction between right and wrong. It is said now that evil is only an undeveloped form of good, that right and wrong merge in one another, and that the old teaching that right and wrong are in contrast to one another is an antiquated and unreal distinction. You have to choose between that teaching and GOD. GOD says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not covet." And when He found the tares among the wheat He said, "An enemy hath done this." We shall never get on until the men of London tear away from their eyes the veil of this false teaching. GOD has laid down, "Happy are the pure in heart," "happy are the merciful," "happy are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness." Do you not see how GOD is justified in His sayings and clear when He is judged?

Look at the faces of men who have been drinking in public-houses for hours. Is their home a happy one? You know perfectly well even in this world that GOD's laws are justified. It is the good and sober man who is happy, and it is the unselfish who wield influence in this world. I do beg of you as my message to you in this Mission to justify the wisdom of GOD.

(2) Then comes the difficult question of the Cross of JESUS CHRIST. I venture to say that you will often find it laughed at in your workshops, warehouses, and factories. The reason that Judas betrayed JESUS CHRIST was not that he hated Him, but that he could not believe that it was the right way to win a kingdom by failure and by refusing to exert the power which he believed his Master had. From the point of view of the world Christianity is foolishness. Has the wisdom of GOD been justified by the way He chose to win the world? I will dare to say that all the millions of people who have been converted since JESUS CHRIST was here have been converted by the Cross of JESUS CHRIST. That is what converted St. Paul.

I have no "New Theology" to preach to you this afternoon. I may be speaking to some conceited, self-satisfied man—a clever workman—who thinks he can convert himself. I have nothing to point you to but the Cross of JESUS CHRIST, Who loves you and gave Himself for you. You have to meet Him, and the first question you will be asked is, "How did My death affect you?" And I pray you will not have to say, "I forgot it." It will be better for a man to say, "I tried to believe it and I could not." The more I kneel in front of the Cross of JESUS CHRIST, the more I say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me,"

the more I feel I must do for Him. There is not one of you who may not leave off swearing, drink, lust, and selfishness, not one who may not kneel at the foot of the Cross and be saved. When I look at the Cross in history I find it is the man who is taking the cross on him, and the woman who patiently bears sickness, and the little child who bears suffering—those are the people who win our heart and whom we miss when they are gone. It is the Cross that wins the world.

(3) When we come to such questions as "How do you explain the Jamaica earthquake?" or "What are you to say when the young wife loses her life in child-birth?" I throw myself back on the wisdom of GOD, which has been shown in history, in nature, and in human nature. I do not pretend to explain everything. CHRIST said, "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now." I see that it is not a good thing to erect buildings in an earthquake zone; that it may be best for us to suffer cholera until we can find out the cure; that not to let fire burn would injure us more than the carrying out of natural law; that to interfere with the law of gravitation to stop an accident would be breaking down the laws of GOD; but I do not pretend to understand why any particular person at any particular time is taken away. I fling myself on the wisdom of GOD. There are a place and a work for them in the other world, and GOD knows why they have gone at that particular time.

V. There are two practical questions I wish to put before you this afternoon: First, Do I or do I not believe in the wisdom of GOD in my daily life? If I do, I am bound to pray. We all of us have our difficulties; I have mine, and if I did not believe the promise, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask

of God, Who giveth liberally and upbraideth not," I should feel myself to be an unbeliever. The practical test of whether we believe in the wisdom of God is whether we ask for it. In all difficulties about doctrine—the real test is whether you ask wisdom of God; I urge you to pray with regard to them for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. If you do, you will be a strong man instead of a weak one. You will walk past that public-house; you will not stand hearing God's name being blasphemed, if you have prayed in the morning.

Secondly, do we believe in the wisdom of God in what He has planned out for us in His Church? You will find, no doubt, in the Church many things which are puzzling to you; why water in Baptism? why the laying on of hands in Confirmation? why the bread and wine in Holy Communion? I know many men who prefer to read a book in a library to coming to church. You remember the case of Naaman. He was persuaded to abide by the wisdom of God instead of relying upon his own wisdom. Are any of you listening to the clever sceptical friend? The wisdom of God has decided that the Church is the healing stream, and I pray you not to be wiser than God. I am no doubt speaking to many who are unbaptised and unconfirmed; to some who never come to Holy Communion; and to some who never pray. The Call of the Father is, "Come back to the healing waters of Jordan." There was wisdom in planning something so simple; the power of God is shown in its simplicity. Come back, bend your stubborn knee in prayer for yourselves and others, and I will promise you that you will soon find such a difference that you will exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

HACKNEY

*THE FIRST WEDNESDAY EVENING**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. Why does not CHRIST come more quickly? By delaying there must be many more souls lost than need be lost if He came at once; because—according to the writer—**when He comes finally, He will destroy the works of the devil.**

If you read the Epistles of St. Peter you will see it clearly stated there why He does not come at once. "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," and it is possible that it is you who sent this very question for whom CHRIST is waiting. When He comes, then comes the Judgment Day. What of the man who is still unrepentant? CHRIST is waiting for him to repent. There may be some of you yourselves who, as we think together of what we are going to consider to-night, may see it was for their sake CHRIST did not come last night. And therefore my answer to that question is that CHRIST is delaying His coming, according to St. Peter's teaching, out of mercy, and not because He does not care for human souls. The LORD delayeth His coming that more and more may be saved.

* Owing to special circumstances this took the place of the ordinary Sunday evening service, hence the small number of questions.

2. "While I appreciate your explanation of man's having a free will for good or bad, **I should be extremely glad if you would help me with an explanation of phenomena outside man's sphere. Have animals free will?** Some are practically slaves, some like the wind have unfettered free will, or like the ocean in a frenzy."

My answer to that is that undoubtedly GOD does rule the world by law. It is better for us that we should sow our seed and be certain that there will be a harvest; that we shall not have, as a kind of accident or chance, the sun rising to-morrow; and it is better for us to be quite sure that fire will burn, than for us to let these things depend upon the chance will or freak of an Almighty Being behind the veil. And therefore undoubtedly we must reckon with the laws of nature. If we put our hand into the flame, that flame will burn us. GOD will not interfere to stop a railway accident, if trucks are left upon the line in the very front of an express train. But I come back to a beautiful scene in the New Testament to show that there is an Almighty Person behind the laws of nature. Why did we have that wonderful scene of CHRIST stilling the tempest? To my mind it was for the express purpose of showing that behind the wildest outburst of nature there is a Person Who, although He works by law for our good, is still behind the laws of nature; and I always like that motto placed upon the grave of a young man killed by an avalanche in Switzerland, "It is I, be not afraid." And therefore my answer is that, while GOD does work by law, laws have not escaped from the hands of GOD, and that when we pray for some one we love to be sheltered or cared for, there are many ways by which GOD can answer our prayer without stopping the working of the laws of nature. What science calls the uniformity of nature, faith calls the faithfulness of GOD.

HACKNEY

THE FIRST WEDNESDAY EVENING

V

THE CALL TO THE CONSCIENCE

"And they heard the voice of the LORD GOD walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD GOD amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD GOD called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"

GEN. iii. 8, 9.

THE motto of this Mission, or the message of it, rather, is "The Call of the FATHER"; and we come now to speak of the Call of the FATHER to the individual conscience of men and women. The reason I have chosen this very familiar passage in the Book of Genesis is because it gives me exactly the four points that I want to put to you with regard to the Call of the FATHER to the individual conscience.

(1) The first is that GOD the FATHER loves *you*. We cannot leave that point; we cannot go away from it, until we believe it. I believe our religion suffers more than any other thing from the utter unreality of more than half of it. We get accustomed to certain words of religion, to certain phrases, which are so familiar to

us that they are just like coins that have lost their edge, as for instance such a phrase as "the love of GOD." I do really believe that to some, even to some who come to church regularly, it scarcely has any real meaning at all. Do not let me here to-night make any one sad whom GOD has not made sad. There may be some—please GOD there are many—here to-night who are aglow with the love of GOD. Their religion is everything to them. They love to praise GOD; they look forward to their prayers; they dedicated long ago, and dedicate every day, their whole lives to GOD. Their home life is simply framed upon what they understand to be the will of GOD. The law of purity, the law of worship, the law of kindness, rule their characters and their households. And if there are any such among you, in GOD's name, let me not make them sad; they ought to be very happy. What I ask from them is a deep thankfulness for what GOD has given them and a genuine humility. "There but for the grace of GOD goes John Bradford," a great saint said when he saw some one led to the scaffold. And I ask them for their prayers. They must not be like the elder brother of the prodigal, jealous, conceited, aloof—they are the children at home now in the FATHER's house; and I ask them for their earnest prayers, that, as in addition to a great pressure of other work, I go round East London this Lent to sound the Call of the FATHER, some who are not like them, who have not their faith, may come back when they hear their FATHER's voice. That is all; that is what I want you to pray for.

> Sing notes of love that some who hear,
> Far off inert, may lend an ear,
> Rise up and wonder and draw near.

But for those who are not like that, I pray that the Holy Spirit to Whom we have already prayed together to-night may aid me; I want to believe more myself, and to make every one of you believe more in the love of God for me, the love of God for you.

What things then are there which ought to make us believe that God loves me and loves you? Think over them for a moment; in the first place He made you. Here we have in Genesis the account of how Adam and Eve were made, in a pictorial form of course; but He just as literally made you as He made Adam and Eve. The long chain of secondary causes by which you came into existence does not prevent your being a thought of God. I am speaking to each individual as if I had you alone in church, and that is the only way to speak to souls. I say God made you because He loved you; and when I ask why anything was made, why God made anybody, there is no answer that I have ever read except this one, that He made us to spread happiness, because He wanted so many more millions of people to sun themselves in the sunshine of His own happiness. And you here to-day are created that you may sun yourself in the sunshine of God, and be bright and happy here and live for ever afterwards with God and the holy angels. And therefore your creation is a sign of love.

But when you came into this world, did you find yourself quite alone, solitary, in a desolate world? Not at all. You found a father or mother, at least, probably brothers and sisters—you found yourself, in other words, in a home. It is quite true that there are some who do not find themselves in a home—the poor homeless waifs and strays that we, in Christ's name, try to gather into homes; but

probably all who are here present found yourselves in a home. That home, with the warmth of its love, was the token to you of the love of God. As you ask yourself, "Is it true, what the Bishop says—that God loves me?" I say think over the care and protecting love you found in the home that God had got ready for you when you came into this cold world.

Had He prepared anything else for you? Was your soul provided a home as well as your body? For what other do you suppose that He took all this infinite trouble in creating a Church? When you were brought — perhaps in Hackney parish church itself—to the font, you were brought into a spiritual home. We have got to make that spiritual home more of a home than it is. It always seems to me that at present the great failure of the Church is its failure to make itself felt as a real home, so that every one feels at home in it—its failure to make that brotherhood and sisterhood of those who worship in the same place a reality, not a mere name, but what God meant it to be. He prepared a beautiful spiritual home for you when you came into the world, and that spiritual home was another sign of His love.

Or look back into your own life a little; I do not know anything about you individually, but I know about my own life, and I can see many tokens of love even in things I have had to bear. I see now that they were tokens of love. You look into your own life; do you mean to tell me that God has not been dealing with you, that He has not been helping you, that all through those boyish troubles or those girlish troubles you have had no answer to your prayers? I do not believe it, and you do not believe it either. As a matter of fact, when you are perfectly honest and straight with yourself—and we will look at some of the excuses

presently under which we often shelter—you know that GOD has shown Himself a Father to you, that again and again He has helped you, again and again when you have wandered away He has brought you back. If you will look round to-day on your life,—the sunshine, the air, the love of wife or husband, father or mother, brother or sister, the grace and the strength, and remember that He has given it Himself,—I think you will believe a little more in the love of GOD. Whether you believe it or not, the fact remains: you to whom I am speaking, and to whom I have, as I believe, been sent by GOD, to give you this message—you are the object of the deep love of GOD; GOD loves you. GOD the FATHER Himself loveth you. JESUS CHRIST says so, and when you kneel down, you have what we often forget, the whole of GOD listening to you, attending to you; and if you have not knelt down, although there are millions who have prayed, GOD has missed your voice. That is the first thing; what was true of Adam is true of you.

(2) Then the second thing is that only in full and free communion with this Heavenly FATHER is there any real lasting happiness. While Adam had nothing between him and GOD he had his Eden, he had his Paradise; he was happy, Eve was happy. Is it or is it not a fact that, even in this fallen world, and after all these years, there is such a thing as real happiness to-day? I have not too much time for reading books, though I read what I can, but my work makes me read human nature all day; and I will say this as a witness, that I have seen here in London, in spite of pain, in spite of trouble, in spite of difficulty, a real Heaven upon earth. "Certainly," says Bacon, "it is Heaven upon earth when a man's mind rests in Provi-

dence, moves in charity, and turns upon the poles of truth." That is a beautiful saying; and I would like to ask you—I wish I could talk one by one to each—I should like to ask you whether you do not remember some happier days than perhaps you have now; days when you were good, before that trouble came into your life, before that thing got between you and GOD; before you began that guilty friendship which is on your conscience to-night; before you left off your prayers; before you gave up the Communion; days when you tasted a little bit of this Heaven on earth; when there was nothing between you and GOD. CHRIST said, "I tell you their angels do always behold the face of My FATHER Which is in Heaven"—that refers to the children; and at the time when you were a child, when He hid those things from the wise and prudent to reveal them to babes; is it not true that you knew then a happiness which it is quite likely you do not know now? Anyhow, whether it is true or not, the fact remains that these are solid, heavenly truths, and that, whether a man is rich or whether he is poor, whether it be man, woman, boy or girl, no one has solid, lasting peace and happiness, who is not at peace with GOD, and who is not living each day in blessed, quiet, restful communion with the FATHER of spirits.

(3) And that brings me to my third point. It is never the case that GOD leaves us, but always that we leave GOD. People sometimes misunderstand what is called the Gospel of Reconciliation. They imagine that it is something which is going to reconcile GOD to us. Nothing of the sort. The Gospel of Reconciliation always is to reconcile us back to GOD. That is what CHRIST came to do. He came as the outcome of the FATHER'S love; the FATHER took a share in the

sacrifice of CHRIST. He gave His only SON. The SON of GOD came, not as it used to be thought, to pacify an angry FATHER,—giving His blood to pacify the angry FATHER,—but to reconcile *us* back to GOD. GOD does not want any reconciling to us. The sun is steady in the heavens; we may not feel it always as we do not feel the sun in the fog, but every morning GOD's love falls on you as faithfully as the sun. And in every case it is not that GOD has gone away from us, but that we have gone away from GOD. I remember twenty years ago some one saying to me, "Remember this; it is not that you have got hold of GOD, but GOD has got hold of you." The difference is between two different kinds of religion. If it was true that our steadfastness depended on our poor little feeble hold upon GOD, we should be indeed in a bad way. But it is GOD Who got hold of us, so long as we do not throw ourselves out of His grasp. And therefore as the ALMIGHTY came down into the garden in the cool of the day and said, "Adam, where art thou?" so exactly GOD acts to-night. This little interval of time is nothing; "a thousand years is as one day." GOD comes down speaking through His servant—but GOD Himself does it—and says, "Adam, Eve, where art thou?" It is the Call of the FATHER to the conscience of the child who has wandered away.

(4) And that brings us to the fourth, and in some way perhaps the most striking of all the similarities between what we do to-day and what Adam and Eve did: they hid themselves from the presence of the LORD GOD among the trees of the garden. They hid themselves. Now, why do I say that is exactly what we do to-day? I am going to show you. I wrote down on my way here to-night the sort of trees

under which we hide ourselves to-day, when perhaps we have heard a sermon which has touched us and we say to ourselves, "Well, I am not what I ought to be; there are things in my life which are amiss." These are the kind of trees under which we hide ourselves: "It is only a friendship." That is the way many an unhappy married life begins—"Only a friendship," but it slipped in between the perfect loyalty between man and wife, and which, beginning with something that looks so innocent, finally undermines what was meant to be the most beautiful thing in the world. Is any one under that tree to-night? When God says "Adam, Eve, where art thou?" do you say, "It is only a friendship"? Or again it is "My health." God calls, mind you, for service. When He says "Adam, where art thou?" to some man here who has never done a stroke of work for God or His Kingdom yet, or when He calls to some young woman in the prime of life to come and use her powers to win others to Him, sometimes their excuse is, "My health." It may be—God knows—a perfectly true answer. There are thousands who would love to do more for God than they do, and whose great sorrow it is that their poor health prevents their doing what they might. But we have a great many in our midst in London to-day of people who fuss about their health, who are hindered from doing a useful day's work because of perpetual anxiety about their health, and who have made it, perhaps unconsciously to themselves, an excuse for not coming out from under the tree and doing an honest day's work while there is time. "Work, work, work, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." Or perhaps it is "My family temper." "My temper is so peculiar," that is the way some ill-tempered man, who is

making his home a perfect hell upon earth, sometimes talks. He hides under that tree. "My family temper," indeed! as if every one has not got some failing to conquer, as if GOD would allow a "family temper" to be so strong upon a man that he could not control it by the grace of GOD. And it is the same with the temptation to drink regarded as a family failing. I do hope there is no man or woman here who is sheltering under that miserable tree; it is a very thin one. If there is, be certain of this, the FATHER sees you through that tree, and He will never accept as an excuse for an uncontrolled and selfish temper, "It is my family temper," or "It is our family failing," for a man or woman who gives way to drink. Or perhaps it is, "I am only following nature; I am only following the dictates of human nature." I have had that said to me this week already. Do let us give up cant. Human nature! What are we talking of? It is human nature, not mere animal nature, that we have, and human nature means the will in imperial control of the animal nature; the will is the check which animals have not got. There are other checks in animal nature of which I need not speak, but the check given to us men and women is the check of the will in conscious self-control. And therefore it is an utter mistake to think that in following instincts or passions you are following human nature. Nothing of the kind. There is nothing wrong with the body; there is nothing wicked but a wicked will, nothing in the world. The body with its blind instincts simply follows them if left to itself, but that is not human nature. That is merely animal nature. And therefore you are under a tree which has deceived thousands—a tree which should be cut down at once if you are

excusing yourself for any breach of God's laws with the idea that you are only following the dictates of human nature. Or perhaps it is, "If only I had been better brought up!" Do you remember, my brother, that remarkable sermon of Phillips Brooks' on the Golden Calf and the excuse which Aaron made? "I threw it in the fire and there came out this calf," that is what Aaron said; but he made no sort of allusion to the fact that he had himself moulded the calf and shaped it, and that the fire had only hardened what he had already shaped. And when a man says, "If I had not gone to that school, and learnt those bad habits," or "If I had had a better chance," or "If I had been put into a different office or a different firm in the City, or made rather different friends, I might have been different," it is exactly the same as Aaron's excuse of which God made such short work in olden days, "I cast it into the fire and there came out this calf." And Bishop Phillips Brooks points out in his unerring way that when a father has spoilt his son, taken no trouble to correct his faults, and then turns piteously round and says, "There came out this calf," it is over and over again the father's fault for the careless self-indulgence with which he treated his son. Or perhaps it is, "But my children go to Sunday-school, my wife goes to church." My dear brother, "no man can deliver his brother or make agreement unto God for him," not even the best wife or the most loving children. Your soul came into the world alone, and alone your soul will leave this world, and alone you will stand before the Judgment Seat of God. And the idea that your wife and children can make up for an utter want of devotion and prayer and self-discipline in your own life is a tree under which you are sheltering yourself

and have been hiding perhaps for years. Come out, my brother, face GOD; that tree will never cover you at all. Or perhaps it is, "I have been caught now by new ideas." "I am a Christian Scientist." Or "I have been reading about the New Theology, and all this old-fashioned talk seems to me rather out of date." My dear friend, man or woman—and I find that the women in London are as foolishly caught, and more easily so even than the men, by ideas and excuses like those—nothing can make out of date the fact that you are a living soul made by GOD; nothing can make GOD out of date; and nothing can make out of date the fact that you have to meet GOD some day to give an account of your life, and that this little span of probation time on earth is the time you have to prepare for that meeting. Nothing can alter the fact that your happiness now and hereafter depends on your being in communion with that personal GOD. And over and over again these new ideas are merely taken up—I speak of what I know—to hide a slothful and careless spiritual life and as a cloak to excuse you from ever taking any trouble about your own spiritual need.

And just to take one more—"There is plenty of time," and "My friend does not do any better than I." Well, when we see the funerals rolling down our streets; when we remember, as I have often said, that somebody dies in London every eight minutes, day and night, it almost makes one shiver when a mortal man or woman who may die within a week or an hour says "there is plenty of time." No, the Call of the FATHER is not to be trifled with like that. The Call of the FATHER is uttered in the deepest love. The Call of the FATHER is a call back to faith, back to purity, back to a good conscience, back to communion, back to Eden. Yes, if Adam had been straight and had

not laid the blame on others, perhaps he would have been allowed back into Eden. At any rate, *you* can come back into the Eden of being at peace with GOD. To delay, to put it off, saying, "Well, I will think about it another time," is a terrible insult to GOD when one thinks Who GOD is and the trouble He has taken and the love He has shown. What I do plead with you for is that instead of that, you should come out from under the trees whatever they are. I cannot tell what tree it is that any one is under; I merely give a sample of some of the trees. Come out from under the trees which are hiding us from our true selves, so that every son and daughter of this church shall look into the face of their FATHER Who calls to them, "Where art thou, My son?" and reply, "Take me back, FATHER, into Thy home."

After prayer, the following words were added:—

I want you to take the Commandments at some quiet time, especially those of you who have not done it for a long time;—think over those Commandments by yourself quietly, and see which you have broken. Those Commandments are explained by a great many books, which will help you by suggesting questions on the Commandments. "Helps to Worship" is one that occurs to me as a cheap book, but there are plenty of others. Get quietly by yourself and ask the HOLY SPIRIT to show you at what special point you have come away from GOD—in other words, what Commandments of GOD you have been breaking—and then confess to GOD, so that by the service next Wednesday you will know much more about yourself than you know to-night. Then every day—that is whether you have been doing so regularly or not—every day before you go to work kneel down and

begin every day till next Wednesday with prayer to God of some sort, in your own words, and always say at the end, "God bless the Mission in East London, and especially the service next Wednesday in Hackney Church."

And then, thirdly, look round for some one who is not in the habit of going to church,* and see if you cannot bring them with you next Wednesday evening. We are told, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren"; and there is many a person who has been brought to salvation and to a new life by the influence of some friend who has simply brought them along with them to the Mission service. If you will do these three things—that is all I ask you to do between now and next Wednesday —please God we may have a blessing here upon the service then.

* It is interesting to record that a large number acted on this suggestion and thereby gathered an immense congregation for the next service.

HACKNEY

THE SECOND WEDNESDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. There is first a very touching question from a young man; if I knew the writer I should answer him privately to his address. But I can answer his question without details. It is about **the terrible struggle a man has in fighting against temptation**, and he says a man is more often than not tempted beyond his strength in one persistent besetting and perhaps hereditary sin. He may have had a good home and a good Christian training, and he knows that if he can only realise the power of GOD'S SPIRIT he would without doubt conquer that sin. But he cannot realise that power.

"Why does not GOD"—that is what the question is—**"come to his help?"**

Now, if you are tempted in this manner, and find yourself thus without power, I want you to realise this—that GOD *has* come to your rescue. There must be something which is stopping you from throwing yourself with absolute abandonment and faith on GOD'S power, for when any young man (or young woman for the matter of that), struggling with besetting sin, really says, "O GOD help me; JESUS stand by me," really means to abandon his sin, does not run into temptation, and therefore tempt GOD, avoids the bad company, and the occasion of sin—there has never been a case

when God has not enabled him or her to conquer it. And so do look again — look again into your real state. Is it not that either you have not the moral courage to break with the association which leads you into the sin, or that you have not really got the desire to absolutely desert it, and have done with it for ever? God never fails His son who really casts himself upon His strength.

2. There are two questions not quite so personal, but very nearly as personal, about marriage. One is from one who was an undergraduate at Oxford, and refers to two or three sermons that he heard me preach at Oxford.

"Would a future priest who feels he could not conscientiously say 'Blessed are the pure in heart' do wrong to marry?"

And the other question which I shall answer with this one is from a married man.

"I wish you would preach a sermon on marriage; I am sure it would be a help to many men and women. There are so many unhappy marriages. Should not married people be more companions to each other?"

He speaks of the reserve which spoils so many marriages—the reserve on deepest questions.

I would answer both by saying, The young unmarried man does not realise apparently yet what marriage from God's point of view is. It is true that there is a carnal side to marriage, but that is not the essence of marriage—that is not the great thing. The great thing is a beautiful comradeship between the man and his wife, the most beautiful comradeship possible in the world. And therefore I would say to him if he is present, "There is not the slightest reason why you should not be as pure in heart when you are married as when you are unmarried. You are misunderstanding what marriage is. It never was meant not to be a pure thing. The man was meant to be as pure in heart and the woman as pure in heart when they were married as when they were

unmarried. So do remember that you aim, if you aim at marriage and wish to be married, at a beautiful comradeship, which is the great feature of a true marriage." That is my answer to the first question. Touching the other question, there certainly ought not to be that reserve in the deepest things between a man and his wife. It is a blessed thing—and I often say so at marriages—for a man and his wife to pray together every day—to have, at any rate, some of their prayers together —and not to hesitate to talk to each other about the deepest things in the world. Marriage ought to be a great companionship on the deepest things. And therefore it is quite true that many marriages are unhappy—I know only too many that are unhappy in London—because they have never been begun on the right basis; husband and wife ought to be married in CHRIST. The whole home ought to breathe an atmosphere of GOD, and then marriage is what GOD wants it to be.

3. The next is a question of quite a different kind:

"Why is it I find the hardest part of Christianity centres in the realisation of the life of JESUS CHRIST on earth? I continually read hymn 144 ('Ancient and Modern'), 'We saw Thee not when Thou didst come,' but have to confess it is almost impossible for me to realise the fact as stated in it."

Now I feel certain that the writer, probably from lack of opportunity, has never studied Christian evidence. I believe many Church people wake up and suddenly say, "How do I know all this is true?" They have never studied anything, never read anything about the evidence of the life of JESUS CHRIST, outside the Gospel, and therefore they have nothing to fall back upon. I do want to see, especially in a place like Hackney, well attended classes for instruction in such matters. There is plenty of teaching power in the staff here if people will draw upon it. There ought to be a couple of hundred at a lecture upon the history of the Bible, or on Christian evidence, in order that all may be much more

intelligent Christians than at present. We are at the mercy too often of every secularist's sneer because we do not know enough. Take four points, which I have only time to mention. Do you realise, my brother who asks this question, that JESUS CHRIST is mentioned by the historian Tacitus? "JESUS CHRIST was put to death"—I could tell you the Latin words if you wanted them—"in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar." Therefore He is a historical character quite apart from our Gospel history or any Christian history at all. Then, again, have you thought how the whole of History centres, as it were, round JESUS CHRIST? He is to-day by far the greatest influence in Europe. You talk about the German Emperor, or some one else, being a great personality. JESUS CHRIST has always towered, like a great statue, above the head of every personality in the whole of Europe; everybody is dwarfed by Him. Or again, take Sunday (I shall have a word to say about Sunday in a minute), how did Sunday come to us? I am just taking an obvious point. It is quite clear that a body of Jews—a very conservative body of people—changed their sacred day; from Saturday to Friday? No. But it would have been Friday if JESUS CHRIST had died and never been seen again. That was the day He died. But to Sunday. Why Sunday? Nothing whatever happened on a Sunday unless the Resurrection took place. And therefore the existence of Sunday alone is a standing proof of the truth of Christianity. So again with the Christian Church. Do you suppose that this great victorious Christian Church which converts hundreds of thousands every year throughout the world was started by the sight of a dead peasant on the Cross on Good Friday? It is impossible. The disciples were all going away miserable and unhappy, thinking that they had been mistaken in their hopes. It must have been something tremendous that happened on the Sunday which started the Christian Church on its victorious career.

4. Then comes a very interesting point about conscience. I have laid considerable stress upon people knowing the

difference between right and wrong, as a sign that God was a righteous God. But the writer quite reasonably states :

"Conscience seems to call right whatever the possessor has been trained to do as being part of his or her religion.

The Hindu woman would place her offspring on the banks of the Ganges and think that she was doing what was right."

The answer is quite plain. Conscience must be educated. What I called attention to was the fact of its existence, that we know the difference between right and wrong as we know the difference between black and white. But it is a very great truth that you have hit upon, my brother, and that is that conscience must be educated. Time after time people seem to imagine that they have only to say, "My conscience tells me to do this or that." Yes, but ought it to do it? Ought not your conscience to tell you to do something else? That is a very important question. And therefore it is not enough to possess a conscience : we have to educate the conscience. The Old Testament is a history of the education of the conscience of the chosen people. You do not suppose it was right in reality for Jael to drive a nail through the head of a man who came in to shelter in her tent? You do not suppose it was right for Abraham to sacrifice his son? He was not allowed to do it. And what you find is this, that the Old Testament is the history of the education of conscience, and that God can only get out of each age the morality of which that age is capable. You read the Old Testament with tenfold interest if you realise how God is educating the conscience of thousands. He made Abraham sacrifice a ram instead of his son—another education in conscience. So with regard to the Hindu woman. She needs Christianity, and when she has believed Christianity she will never lay down her baby by the Ganges to die. And when people talk to you about not wanting Christian missions and leaving people in their primitive innocence you remember that Hindu woman with her baby, or the Chinese

who sometimes kill their female children even now. It is clear, then, that it is a primary duty for each to educate his or her conscience. A man or woman may be called to be a missionary, but they will never respond. Why? Because they have never educated their conscience, either by the Bible, by CHRIST's command, or by the means of grace. I do hope that all of us, as a result of this Mission, will educate our conscience by the standard of JESUS CHRIST. We shall be judged by the standard of "that Man Whom He hath ordained" according to the Bible, and therefore "What would CHRIST do in your place?" is a real standard of the Christian conscience.

5. Then comes a question about the teaching of the Church. Would you kindly answer the following question:

Is confession to a priest of sins already confessed to GOD necessary to obtain forgiveness of the same?

Certainly not. You will find the teaching of the Church of England quite plain in the Rubric at the beginning of the Communion Service; it does not direct confession *to* a priest: that is a misunderstanding—confession to GOD in the presence of a priest is allowed in the Church of England to those who cannot quiet their conscience without it. But to teach that you cannot be forgiven without it is contrary to GOD's Word, and to the teaching of the Church to which we belong. On the other hand, undoubtedly there are many who feel an immense relief by availing themselves of the directions given in the Prayer Book. And therefore what you have to do—you need not hesitate about it—is to read very carefully the opening Rubric of the Communion Service, and pray GOD to guide you aright as to which method of confession He wishes you to use.

6. **How far is a definite religious faith essential to the fulfilment of GOD'S will in us? Is faith in GOD an end in itself?**

My answer is: Faith in GOD is to a large extent an end in itself. Do you not remember what St. Augustine said:

"My heart is restless till it rests in Thee"? And there may be many men, and women too, in this church who have never got rest yet, because they have never found the true end in which they are to rest. The heart is restless till it rests in GOD. On the other hand, faith in GOD must issue in a good life and one useful to others.

7. **Is a moral life a great step towards faith?**

A very great step. Do you not remember that JESUS CHRIST said: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of GOD"? If you are in doubt about the Christian faith, you cannot do better than live up to what light you have got. Do the next duty, pray for light, and you have the promise: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of GOD." And thousands have found that promise fulfilled.

8. The same writer asks about **Intercession.**

I have said, I think, intercession is almost wholly a matter of revelation. I could not have stood up and told you that we had power to move the hand that moves the universe, unless I had been told it by JESUS CHRIST Himself. It is very like—to take an illustration every one can understand—the story of our late Queen when she was opening the Town Hall gates at Sheffield. In consequence of her age and infirmity, she sat in her carriage, but a golden key was put into her hand, and she was told that, if she turned that golden key, the Town Hall gates would open at a distance. They were connected with the key by an electric wire. She did turn the key and the gates flew open. It is like that with intercession and prayer. We have the golden key of prayer, and it is promised us by One Who must know that the gates will open to our prayer.

9. **Will the preacher say that forgetfulness of sin does not obliterate it?**

The writer was taught by some one that, because you forget your sins, it did not mean they were forgiven. That

is the point, and the writer is much distressed. The whole question turns on whether the heart is changed or not. If our hearts are changed, then when we have confessed our sins, even if we do forget some boyish or girlish sin, it will be forgiven. In most forms of Confession you will find the words, "And the sins which I cannot now remember." But, if we are not thoroughly meaning business about our confession or repentance, and wilfully ignore part of our life, then of course those sins are not forgiven. But if any persons taking the Ten Commandments ask the grace of the HOLY SPIRIT to look into their lives, taking their boyhood or girlhood from youth up to their married life, we will say, and then the time afterwards, they will find that all the sins which are really, as it were, on their conscience come back in the light of the HOLY SPIRIT, and if they confess them to GOD they are forgiven.

10. **What is to be done about fasting in Lent?**

The writer says that, owing to thinking that no food, or scarcely any, must be taken, she is herself hungry and fainting as she writes the letter. Therefore it makes her irritable and of less use to others.

I have already in this diocese taken the responsibility of saying to all who have asked that the rules of fasting in Lent will be fulfilled by abstaining from meat on the Wednesdays and the Fridays. And I feel certain of this, that no one was ever meant to fast in such a way as to spoil their usefulness in life and to unfit them for the service of GOD. On the other hand, CHRIST Himself said, "The children of the bridechamber cannot fast while the Bridegroom is with them, but when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast in those days." And all the Church rules of discipline and fasting are founded on that Commandment.

HACKNEY

THE SECOND WEDNESDAY EVENING

VI

PRAYER

WE take for the second Response of the Soul to the call of the FATHER, *Prayer*.

Now, first, what is prayer? Next, is it reasonable? Next, how are we to do it? Next, what are the obstacles to prayer? And, lastly, what is the secret of power in prayer?

(1) Now, first, *what is prayer?* I believe, even to-day, many think that prayer is simply begging for something or other, perhaps a gift of money, which people specially want, and that is all. All I can say is, if that is what your prayer is and nothing else, I do not wonder you do not have much happiness in prayer. Long before we think of asking for anything prayer begins. Prayer is communion with GOD, even if nothing be asked at all. The Prodigal Son has begun to pray when he has returned, and as he kneels in a glow of gratitude, when he finds his father's arms around him, and the kiss upon his forehead; he has begun to pray before he has ever said a word about "Make me as one of thy hired servants."

Therefore, prayer is in the first place simply communion with the Heavenly FATHER. It is like some dear son—perhaps this may appeal to you fathers—who has not behaved himself well, and who has come back, and who just puts his head upon your shoulder, as he used to when he was a little child, and says, "Father," and nothing else at all. Now do remember that. Do get away to-night from all these selfish, mercantile, mechanical ideas of prayer. We shall speak about asking and receiving in a minute, but it does not begin with that at all. True prayer begins with a loving child coming home to his father. An old woman said once, "When I pray, I just look at GOD, and GOD looks at me." Therefore you who do come to church, you regular church people, will never get real happiness in the services if you allow them to become mechanical. I was much struck by two men after last Wednesday's service who said how much they had enjoyed the service, and who admitted how easy it was for the regular Matins and Evensong to become mechanical, instead of being a help. Now, our Matins and Evensong, and our regular services, are beautiful services, but they are only beautiful if behind them the whole time there is a living Person to Whom we are speaking, and a living trust and love in us, which breathe through the prayer. Therefore, whether you are one of those who do not come to church, or whether you are one of those who do come, go back to the facts which underlie all prayer: "GOD made me, GOD loves me, GOD knows me, GOD thirsts for my love. He is not satisfied without it, and He has sent even these Mission services to call me back to Him." Prayer begins in a child's trust.

Then comes quite naturally asking and receiving.

When that boy whom I pictured has told you, perhaps with sobs, his sorrow, of course you try and help him; you give him what he wants. Perhaps it is advice, perhaps he asks something as to which you feel it to be wise to say, "No, it will be best for you not to have it." But it is all part of your love for him, and his trust in you, that of course he asks, and you give to him the thing he wants, whatever it is. That is how asking and receiving comes into prayer. It comes in the second place, and not in the first place, and that makes it quite clear, does it not, how foolish the people are who try to frighten us away from prayer with suggestions in favour of a hospital test, suggesting that prayer should be made for one ward and not for another ward, and then an examination be held to see whether it did any good. Can you imagine a more contemptible spirit? The people who begin in that spirit are not praying at all, and have not got the spirit of prayer at all. And there are people who say, "What is the limitation of the promise? If it means anything, it means everything —'Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you'?" Would you grant your boy's request if he asked for something which you knew to be bad for him? Would a woman give her child a red-hot poker if the little child asked for it? Of course it means that, if it is good for us, and if it is best for us, it will be given, but otherwise it will not be given. And you who may be praying now for something which has not been received, perhaps it has not come because it is best for it not to come. Over and over again we are tested in perseverance. Or take that other difficulty, in the third place, which used to be put to me in East London. Two sides are praying for victory—how

can God answer both? Why by bringing to pass what is right. There is only one will of God. The will of God is right, whatever it is, and there is one right. We do not know which the right is. We may be quite conscientiously fighting for what we think right, but as both sides pray to God, God answers with the right answer, which is best for both. So in answer to that question, "What is prayer?" we must answer that asking and receiving is part of prayer as well as communion with God. I want you to picture —both those who do not pray and those who do— God standing over your prayer-desk or your bedside of a morning, with His hands full of gifts—wisdom, power, strength, and love—just the very things you want; yes, and temporal things, if they are good for you—and saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened"; and, if you really believe that God is standing there making you this glorious offer, you are mad if you do not take it.

(2) *Is it reasonable?* If prayer is what I have just said, then it would be not only unreasonable, but quite unnatural, not to pray. The instinct of prayer to us is like the wing of a bird to a bird and the fin of a fish to a fish. The wing of the bird demands the air, the fin of the fish demands the water. The instinct of prayer demands God. Therefore the only monstrosity of nature, just as much a monstrosity as a wingless bird or a finless fish, is the prayerless man or woman, because the deepest and most real instinct they have is not satisfied. Prayer therefore is reasonable from that point of view. So again it is a wonderful, historical fact that the men of prayer have always been the men of power in the world. I want to convince you about this. Some of you men—and I am glad to see such a

large number of men here to-night—if you are arguing with some friend in the workshop, be sure and ask him why it is that the men of prayer in the world have been the men of power. Take only one instance. Where did they always go to find men for the forlorn hope in Havelock's days? They went to Havelock's prayer meeting; that is where they found men who had the courage to come out for the forlorn hope. If I had time, I could prove, from an abundance of instances, that the men of prayer are the men of power; which shows that those who most believe in another world are those who turn this world upside down for good. So again we are not asking GOD to do more in the realm of law than we do ourselves. I pick up this watch, for instance, in my hand, and in doing so I modify, without breaking, the law of gravitation. I can do it by the effort of my will. Do you suppose that the will of GOD is less free than the will of man? Man is a little Viceroy of GOD, as it were, but GOD's will is not likely to be more bound by His own laws than man is. When we ask GOD to do a thing, His will is able to modify, without breaking, His laws, and He is left a free agent to do it. Therefore it is that on those three grounds alone—and I could add others—prayer is reasonable.

(3) Then you say, "If that is so, *how are we to do it?* Ought not prayer to be more a free kind of spontaneous thing than it is? Why have times, why have seasons, why have services?" Well, I will frankly admit that I think we ought to have a great deal more of these kind of free services, where we have extempore prayer in our church. I am all for the Church being elastic in its work, I am all for not being bound to our stated services. I like to kneel

down when I feel inclined, and often do in the course of the day, many times a day, before an important engagement, before I am to speak, or before visiting—just kneel down and make it a natural thing to kneel and speak to GOD. And everybody ought to do so; GOD's child ought to be able to speak to his FATHER in his heart, and kneel down quite naturally and pray in his own words. But here comes the point about the time. Do we not know, we who know human nature, and our own nature, well, that the thing that is going to be done at *any* time is done at no time, and that unless you have a fixed time for kneeling down and saying your prayers, they will not be said at all? And, if you say "Never mind about Sunday, I will worship GOD another day," do you ever worship GOD another day? No, GOD knew human nature very well when He laid down that we should do this by law, that we should have set times for prayer, set times for worship, and set days to devote to His worship. And, as a matter of fact, people who think it is so easy to be natural, and say they can go and speak quite naturally, want years of practice to speak naturally. Freedom is only acquired by attention to law, and it is really so in every realm. The subject would make quite an interesting sermon in itself, if one had time. It is those who obey law who are really free. So with the laws of prayer. It is the laws of prayer which make us spontaneous in prayer.

(4) That brings me, in the last place but one, to *the obstacles to prayer*. Suppose for argument there are some people here who never pray, or some who feel they pray very badly. Well, one obstacle is undoubtedly sloth; you are too fond of your bed in the morning to get up in time to pray, you are too lazy to

get up and make time for God. Now, if you only think what prayer is, that this Almighty God is waiting to hear the voice of His child, I believe that you will find it a privilege of which you must avail yourself. Therefore, do beware of sloth as regards prayer, sloth which hinders prayer. So with inattention. We want more concentration. When you come to church and pray, when you kneel down, it is everything to concentrate your mind. It has been very well said that, if you have only five minutes to pray, it is well worth spending one out of the five in remembering what you are going to do. We rush into prayer with our brains full of all kinds of other things. Hush yourself before you pray. So again a great obstacle is selfishness in prayer. I have dealt with that already. We must get to God's point of view before we pray. So again impatience, giving up when prayer is not answered. We forget about the importunate widow, and about the friend who came at midnight. They should teach us to pray on.

(5) Then, lastly, what I call the *secrets of power in prayer* are, first, Simple Faith, then Single-mindedness. The single-minded man has got one idea in his life—to glorify God and spread His kingdom and do his duty, whether as a father in his home or in the parish. The single-minded man prays, and there is nothing between him and the power of God. Are we single-minded enough in our prayer, or have we all the time some little selfish ideas which spoil our prayer? How can we bless the name of Jesus Christ if we do not honour Him? There are some men who never use the name, except in an oath, or to bring discredit on it in some way. If we want power in prayer we must honour the name which we plead before the Mercy Seat. So

we must look at the world from CHRIST'S point of view. CHRIST'S point of view is to bring in all the souls that live to His FATHER'S kingdom. We cannot pray properly unless we are keen upon missionary work. We cannot pray properly if we are not going to spread the kingdom where we live.

Therefore I give as the six secrets of power in prayer: Simple faith, single-mindedness, honour for the Name, perseverance, a right attitude of mind, and expecting an answer.

Now, dear people, you see I have had to concentrate into a few words what might have been expanded into so many; but the end I aim at is this, that every one of us starts a new and better life of prayer. Once realise that GOD wants us and cares for us, once realise, my brother who has not prayed until to-night, that GOD loves and knows you, and you will begin to pray. Pray at home, then come on and pray with others here; then you will be led on to come out for Confirmation, and then you will be led on to the great prayer service, the Holy Communion.

May GOD in His mercy grant that all of us may make a new start to-night—those who have never prayed to pray, and those who have prayed to pray better—that so we may call down more and more power upon London every year, and may prepare ourselves for the beautiful life of prayer and praise and service in GOD'S home in Heaven.

Bethnal Green

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

TO MEN ONLY

VII

THE POWER OF GOD

"God spake once, and twice I have also heard the same: that power belongeth unto God."
Psalm lxii. 11 (Prayer-Book Version).

MY brothers, I need not say what my feelings are at finding myself back in the old church, and in the middle of Bethnal Green, where I lived for nine very happy years; and I could not help praying as I came along that the old proverb repeated in this morning's Lesson about a prophet being without honour in his own country might not be true now that the Mission has reached Bethnal Green. I prayed that the old friendships with so many, which did not lead you so fully as I would have wished in the old days to see things as I did, and to be outspoken strong members of God's Church—that those old friendships might wing my words to your hearts as I speak to you this afternoon as your Bishop.

And our subject is one that well might fire any one. Our subject is "The Power of GOD." We had "The Wisdom of GOD" at Hackney, and "The Holiness of GOD" at Shoreditch, but to-day, rather than any other in my old parish, would I like to speak of "The Power of GOD."

(1) And when I look round to see on what sphere first to fix, in order to illustrate the power of GOD, I cannot get away from *Creation*. I think sometimes mankind must be mad. I say mankind must be mad, when you can even hear the question considered an open one as to whether there is a GOD or not. I remember down in Victoria Park debating one afternoon, and trying to put the reasons why I believed in a GOD before a large gathering of men: and I remember one old man got up at the end, and said, "Well, I votes there is a GOD," and somebody else solemnly seconded him, and some voted there was and some that there was not a GOD. When you really take in the situation in which we are—on a little planet dashing round one of twenty million suns, the whole enormous army of suns moving through space in perfect order, not one running into the other, the little earth itself so carefully poised—I used the same illustration in speaking of the wisdom of GOD—so near to the sun that it is warmed, but not so near the sun as to be scorched; and when you think that those tremendous twenty millions, those blazing armies of the sky are all held together by one hand, and that is the hand of GOD, and that every moment they are directed by Him; that every law of nature requires a continual application of force, and that if He deflected His hand for a moment the earth itself would dash into the abyss or tumble into the sun—you will see the absurdity of debating in the Park as to whether there

is a GOD or not! There *must* be a GOD. Why, if there was no other proof except creation, there must be a GOD. As I used to say sometimes in that very Park, if I took a box of letters and threw them from the pulpit a sufficient number of times, would they ever tumble into a play of Shakespeare? Certainly not. There is the mark of mind in a play; a mind thought out that play of Shakespeare. Is there not the mark of mind in the marvellous panorama, the marvellous play we see every starry night? I want to speak to every class of mind here, and, if some of you stagger in your belief about a GOD, I say come back to the old primitive proof that convinced our forefathers that there was a GOD, and say, "There must be a GOD, for how else was the world made?" As I notice the order and the power displayed in the world in which I live I acknowledge that power belongs unto GOD. I spoke at Hackney of a workman who was watching an astronomer observing an eclipse of the sun, and the astronomer told him what was going to happen. But the workman did not believe it; he was not sure about it, but when he did see the black disc cross the face of the sun, he called to his friend and said, "Come here and see the most wonderful bit of engineering I have ever seen." But as a matter of fact, it is not the eclipse of the sun that is a wonderful bit of engineering, it is the movement of the sun and the earth and the moon and the stars when there is no eclipse. It is just as marvellous to-day on this fine spring afternoon as it is when there is an eclipse of the sun. And the first thing I want to convince you, brothers, young and old, whom I see round me in this church, is that the first mark of GOD's power is this—every breath you draw is given you by GOD, the food you eat is produced by His power, and

if God took His hand away from you at any moment you and all you are would crumble into dust. Therefore I laud and praise the power of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. One day telleth another, one night certifieth another." And, therefore, never doubt, and never allow another to doubt in your presence, that there is a God.

(2) But, after all, if I only had to preach to you that God was a very mighty engineer, the most wonderful engineer in the whole of the universe, it would hardly be worth coming down here at all. I have to preach next something which comes very much more home to many consciences, and very much more home to the conscience of every one who understands it, and that is the second power that God has—the power of life and death; and He is the only one that has it. Perhaps you have seen illustrations of the old gladiatorial shows in Rome, showing how when the poor gladiator was stricken to the ground, the victor looked up to the tiers of spectators to see what the verdict would be. If he was to kill him the thumb went one way, and if he was to release him the thumb went the other way. But, thank God, there is only one Being Who has the power of life and death over us, and that is the Monarch, the King of the universe, God Himself. You remember the king of old who said, "I will not trust myself into any man's hand, but I will trust myself to God." And, in spite of all I am going to say, I thank God that it is God Who is going to judge me, and no one else.

And yet it is a tremendous thing to be judged by God. That is the next thing I want to think over with you. We talk about the Ten Command-

ments sometimes in our light-hearted way, but do we always realise that the Ten Commandments are the Commandments of GOD, the moral King before Whom we are to be judged? My experience of mission work so far is that we almost always put the Gospel before the Law. And I cannot help remembering in Bethnal Green a kind of almost contemptuous tolerance of the Christian Gospel which I am certain was due to the fact that it had been heard before the Law had been preached. In other words, we do not want a SAVIOUR until we believe that we are sinners.

Now, first of all, before we can turn to the Cross with any realisation of its Power, we must realise how we stand before the All-seeing GOD. Let us look at that. We are all here, if I may so say, for business—for spiritual business. We are not only here to hear a sermon and go away and say how good or how poor the sermon was. That is not the question at all. I want you to picture yourself standing as you are at this moment before the All-seeing GOD, Who knows your home life, Who knows your life in the workshop, Who knows what you do on Sunday, Who knows what sort of example you set to the boys, Who knows how you are bringing up your children, Who knows how you are treating the old people, Who knows whether you have broken the moral law, Who knows whether you are a good husband or not, Who knows whether, if you are unmarried, you are living a pure chaste life, Who knows whether you are honest, whether you lie, Who knows on what your heart is set, and Who has given perfectly clearly express Commandments with regard to every one of those things. And the question is: Are we keeping them or not? GOD

only has a right to condemn us, but would GOD condemn us this afternoon? That is the point.

Now let us look at one or two of the Commandments. The First Commandment is the first in every way; GOD is to be first everywhere; no one is to come in, no self-interest, no business habits, no love of any person, no fear of any boon companion is to come in before GOD. GOD is to be first every day. Are you keeping this First Commandment? I do not say you are not. I am not condemning—I am not the person to condemn—any one. It is because I believe the standard of Bethnal Green was meant to be as high as the standard of any part of London that I ask these questions. I have always resented the language of people who said, "I dare say that kind of thing goes on in Bethnal Green." In Bethnal Green, you would know if you had lived there nine years, there is as much possibility of a noble life as in any other part of the world, and therefore I go through these Commandments, because I believe Bethnal Green can keep them as well as any one else.

The Second Commandment—to make no image of GOD which distorts the character of GOD. What about those who stand up in the street corners and paint the picture of an intolerant, harsh, malevolent GOD? What about those—some of you it may be—who have repeated in the workshop something about GOD which has led the boy who heard you to think He was not to be trusted? If that is not making a misrepresentation, a graven image, of GOD, which is the foulest misrepresentation of Him, what is? I do not believe we can commit a worse sin than lead those who at present believe in GOD to turn away from GOD as from a harsh, malevolent, unloving Being.

I know there are difficulties—I have had to answer them in every church. What about the Jamaica earthquake, or the breaking up of a ship in some terrible wreck? Yes, I know there are difficulties. I know GOD works by natural law; I know that He does allow evil. He does not crush free will for purposes of His own; He allows things up to a point to take their course. He is dealing with people of free will and training us to battle with the powers of evil. But because of these difficulties, we are none the less breaking the Second Commandment when we paint GOD as a harsh tyrant, or, on the other hand, as a good-natured Power Who will let sin off.

The Third Commandment.—Have you ever taken GOD'S Name in vain, my brother? Have you taken it in vain in an oath perhaps again and again when things go wrong up at the shop? Or, what is quite as bad, do you live apparently a good life, and go to church, while all the time there is something behind in your life which was not straight? No one takes GOD'S Name in vain worse than the man who preaches the Gospel and then underneath spiritually destroys the souls of GOD'S children.

What about your Sundays? Is worship first? There it is, straight out, the Fourth Commandment. The Sunday is given for our worship of GOD. I do not mean to condemn the visit to the old mother, when perhaps you cannot go in the week; or the little gathering of friends at tea. But GOD first on Sunday. The day is given for worship as well as for rest.

And again with regard to the old people—in the Fifth Commandment—I did not like to see in the old days the young man let his father and mother go into the workhouse while he set up a home of his own.

There might be reasons which made it essential, and many a poor young man has, after a desperate fight, let the old people go into the workhouse. But I did not always think, and, though I dare not speak absolutely for GOD, Who knows everything—I believe that GOD did not think, that such a man was keeping the Fifth Commandment. Certainly we have to honour our father and mother, and to honour those who try to help our souls. We ought certainly to pray for the parson of our parish, and to pray for our Bishop. That all comes under the Fifth Commandment.

"Thou shalt do no murder." What about the boys? What about the influence which you and I have had on those brought into touch with us? Are there any young hopes crushed out? Has there been any budding faith which was nipped by our sceptical sneer? If so we have got to face GOD about it. The "wrath of GOD and the wrath of the LAMB" have a real meaning.

"Thou shalt not steal." I remember what was said to me once when some one took £15—I am speaking of an actual case—"Well, I've got into a bit of trouble." Now that is glossing over a sin if we call dishonesty a "bit of trouble" Or "So-and-so has got into a bit of trouble." We are to keep the commands of GOD.

The Seventh Commandment.—What about your married life? Marriage was never meant to be a kind of licence for prostitution. I have had most terrible revelations of sins in one sense within the law, and yet in another sense most distinctly against the law of GOD, and I do want you to think over what your married lives are like. Are you kind and considerate and loving at home? There is many a young woman with her heart broken by the harshness of

her husband towards her. And if we knew the secret of the increase of drink among women, which is certainly the case to-day, I believe many a home —I have traced it myself several times—has been ruined by the harshness and want of consideration of the husband.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness." Is our word as good as our bond?

"Thou shalt not covet." What about the man whose ambition, whose only idea in life, seems to be just to get through life with his dinner and his glass of beer and his pleasure, and never to look at all beyond this world? If this is our life—I do not say it is; I shook hands as I came in with many a man this afternoon who I know is living a life above this—we must be straight with ourselves. If we are breaking any of the Commandments to-day we are not honouring GOD, and you and I could not stand to-night and look GOD in the face.

And the last thing we will do, when I have finished speaking, is to kneel down and just ask the HOLY SPIRIT to show us how our life does stand. GOD has the power of life and death. It is not whether our friends think us good sort of fellows, not whether we are popular at the club, it is not that we cannot be so very bad because So-and-so does things quite as bad. We are born alone, we die alone, we are judged alone, and you and I have to come one by one up to the Judgment Seat of CHRIST. "No man delivereth his brother, nor maketh agreement unto GOD for him." And that is why I dare not preach to you without pointing out how far-reaching, right through to the very heart and marrow, is the power of GOD.

(3) But I do not need to stop there. If I had to stop

there I should feel I had brought my brothers a very stern and a very loveless message. I had to give it because if we are despising JESUS CHRIST it is because we do not realise what we have to face. But the third glorious sphere of the power of GOD is in forgiveness. He alone can forgive, and He loves to do it. There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, and you could not give joy to GOD in a truer way than in going back and altering your whole life, asking pardon for that commandment you are breaking, going back and being a different man in the shop than you were last week, giving up swearing altogether, giving up drink and taking the money home to your wife and children; you could not give more joy to GOD than by becoming an altered man, breaking with your old life.

GOD is the only one who has power to forgive. There is so much misunderstanding about this. It is quite true that when JESUS CHRIST, His SON, was on earth He gave power to Him to forgive sins—"the SON of MAN hath power on earth to forgive sins"; it is quite true that when that SON went back to Heaven in the power of the SPIRIT and commissioned His Church He sent out His ministers to proclaim pardon. What they had to proclaim was repentance and the forgiveness of sins; we have the power of pronouncing absolution; but we cannot pardon ourselves. We are only ambassadors. If we pronounce absolution over that man who is not repentant, we cannot pardon him. Therefore, as I think over the power of GOD, I love to remember for myself and for you that GOD alone has the power to forgive. "God spake once, and twice I have also heard the same, that (for forgiveness) power belongeth unto GOD." I would love to think that, as the lives, the broken

lives, the self-complacent lives are laid before GOD —and it is a fearful sin self-complacency; the man who goes about pleased with himself and thinking he is quite good enough is really a terrible sinner in the eyes of GOD—and as you see, "I was not so good after all; I see that I have broken GOD's Law in this way or in that, I have not prayed until I came to church for several weeks, and this is the first time I have been in the old parish church for years"—and as in a genuine manly way you say, "Oh GOD forgive me, for JESUS CHRIST's sake," you can have peace with GOD to-day through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. And you may go back to live it all out afterwards. I am not saying that you are going to be a changed man in a second, but you can in this sense. If in church, as we kneel down presently, you confess your sin, GOD will forgive you instantaneously; you may receive pardon from the forgiving GOD.

Redeemed, restored, forgiven,

as we shall sing to-night,

Through JESU's precious blood;
Heirs of His home in Heaven,
O praise our pardoning GOD!

Praise Him in tuneful measures
Who gave His SON to die,
Praise Him whose seven-fold treasures
Enrich and sanctify.

(4) And that brings me to the last sphere of the power of GOD—I expect some of you have found it out already—and that is the marvellous power of the spiritual strength of GOD. That is why it is that boys and weak girls have stood up against tyrants and against persecutors, because they were strong in the

power of GOD. That is why that boy you perhaps noticed years ago, or that man who did not seem physically strong, was able to stand up against the scoffing of the whole workshop, because he had GOD behind him. I used to tell in Bethnal Green a story of the martyrs in the olden days — how the soldiers who were Christians were condemned to stand on a frozen pool, and at night they prayed, "Oh, LORD JESU, forty soldiers have come out to fight for Thee: grant that forty soldiers may receive the crown." One gave up during the night, but still the thirty-nine prayed on the same prayer, and at last towards the morning a soldier in charge of them came out and took the place of the one who had given in and was taken off to the hot baths and the fire; and as they still prayed on, "Oh GOD, forty soldiers have come out to fight for Thee: grant that forty soldiers may receive the crown," at last forty dead bodies lay upon that frozen pool; forty saints received their crowns in Heaven. That was the power of GOD. Or take the power of GOD in sorrow. We live in a city full of sorrow. I am always having people brought to me in sorrow, and I have been by many of you when perhaps the wife or child has been passing away; and nothing impresses me more than the power of GOD in sorrow. How the FATHER seems to come and put His arm round His child! And He loves to do it. You cannot explain how people come through their trouble except in the power of GOD—the spiritual power of GOD. And therefore it is I come to offer you a great choice this afternoon. We were told yesterday* that we were making a great choice on one side or the

* The day of the London County Council election.

other, but I offer you a great choice compared with which no other choice can be considered. I ask you to choose now. I ask you to choose between the quiet, silent, restful power of God and the insolent swagger of the world. You hear many voices sneering at religion, laughing at you, perhaps, for coming to church to-day. You hear the strident voices calling you to get on in the world and to satisfy the lusts of the flesh. On the other hand, there is the quiet power of God, the power of God in creation, the power of God in the conscience, the power of God to forgive, and the marvellous power of God to uphold and comfort. Which are you going to choose to-day? Come, if you can, to-night and on Wednesday; but make your choice this afternoon, and I will promise you, even if I never speak to you another word on this earth, that if you do make the choice and say, "God at all costs; I will come back to God; I choose God at all costs; I will live a life of prayer and of worship, and I will keep the commandments of God," then every year as the years roll on you will acknowledge with greater gratitude, and greater force, and greater conviction, the words of our text this afternoon, "God spake once, and twice I also heard the same, that power belongeth unto God."

Bethnal Green

SUNDAY EVENING

VIII

THE CALL TO THE WILL

"Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children."
Eph. v. 1 (Revised Version).

TWENTY-THREE years ago to-day I preached my first sermon, and it was on this text; and I rejoice to think that what I then felt as a young man was the way to win people to God, I think also to-day, after twenty-three years. It is no good trying to frighten people about hell fire, it is no good trying to paint to them—except from time to time in the course of one's duty to declare the whole truth—the inevitable punishment of sin; but if we want to win them to God, we must sound the call of the Father: "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children." And that is the only message that will bring them back to God. And therefore it is that I sound again to-night the call of the Father in the old parish church of Bethnal Green, and I do pray that there will be a special blessing upon our services here, if only for the sake of old times.

And the first thing—for we shall do no good if we go on without this—that I want every single man and woman, boy and girl, to say to themselves in the next few minutes is this, until we believe it: "I am a child of GOD; GOD made me, GOD knows me; I am not the same as any one else; because GOD is infinite, I have the whole of GOD to attend to me; He misses my voice if I do not pray to Him; and, if I alone had been left out of Heaven, He would have sent legions of angels and the Eternal SON to bring me back." Do you believe it? Do you believe that about yourself? Do you believe that GOD loves you like that? I expect some of you have at home some dear child; perhaps you mothers have a little boy you are thinking of to-night. He is sometimes a trouble to you, he sometimes disobeys you, it is always a worry to think how you are going to keep him in health or even in food, and how he is going to turn out; but you would not miss having that little boy throw his arms around your neck, you would not miss it for all the gold in the world. You yearn over that boy, and that boy turns to you with a fond loving response. Or with some of you fathers—is it not so?—your little girl is the light of your home; is not she the last person you say "Good-bye" to as you go off to work, and whom you expect to come and give you a kiss when you come home? The poet said that a man had two sides, one to face the world with, and one to show a woman when he loved her; and it is equally so with children. Men have two sides: one to face the cynical, hard world—to it they are not going to show their feelings, they are not going to wear their hearts on their sleeve; but another to show a little child when they love her.

Now there is no good in this Mission, there is no good in anything we are going to say to-night, unless we believe that GOD loves us like that. Of course I know all that may be said against the love of GOD, and I am ready to answer any difficulties you may send me to the best of my power. I do not stand up here and say there are no difficulties, because there are plenty; I could state a good many myself. But what I do say is this: in spite of all that tells against it, there is no explanation for creation, there is no explanation for the infinite care GOD has taken about our little world—wrapping it round so carefully with the atmosphere, warming it for us, beautifying it for us—no explanation for His putting us in a home of love when we are born, for bringing us into the great home of the Church when we are baptised; there is no explanation of what your conscience tells you has happened to you, how you have been helped time after time in trouble and distress; there is no explanation of that voice which keeps warning you and speaking to you of GOD, except that GOD loves you. Whether you are wandering from GOD or whether you are safe in the home of His love, I do not know; but GOD knows. And, if you are a wanderer, if you are far from home, listen to the hymn which we have just sung—

> Return, O wanderer, to thy home,
> Thy FATHER waits for thee.

And more than that, listen to His messenger—and I am nothing but His messenger, nothing in the world—who has come on His behalf to call you back home.

Now to-night we are considering the Call of the FATHER to the Will. The first point is: Have we got a will; have we a free will at all? You men may

have been reading some of the trash which is written in our day to convince us that man has no free will at all. If there is no free will, we may as well stop the Mission at once; but I ask you, as sensible men, supposing that among those who work with you a man stole your dinner during the dinner-hour for the third time, and told his workmates that he was under a moral necessity which he was unable to control—I ask you whether you could take that as an excuse. The truth of the matter is, we must never be deceived by all this rubbish. We are too sensible to act by it in ordinary life. Or if some horrible villain came to try to mislead your little daughter, and said he was driven on by inevitable necessity, and therefore was not responsible, how long would you take that excuse? No; if there is no free will, there is no guilt. And when we used to argue down here whether we would rather be clocks bound to go right or wrong, or be free responsible agents with all the risks that attach—and mind there are plenty of risks—I thank GOD that we were too sensible to decide anything but this, that we would rather be free men with a will of our own, free to go right, free to go wrong, than miserable puppets pulled by a wire. And therefore I preach to free men and women this evening. It is perfectly free for you to go home and do nothing whatever in consequence of what I say to you tonight; it is perfectly free for you to say, I do not want to pray and I do not mean to pray, I do not want to come to church and I do not mean to come to church, I do not want GOD and I do not mean to listen to the call of GOD; and you can go away and no one can stop you. And not only so, but there is something within you that is pulling you that way. I hope you will all read your rector's book on sin.

He points out with absolute truth that the meaning of original sin is this, that there is something which we have inherited from our forefathers (and it is original because, as far as we can trace it, it comes from the *origo*, or source of the stream of life), which is pulling us down every moment, some on one point, some on another. There are some here who have inherited a tendency to drink. Perhaps their grandfather died of drink, or their great-grandfather. Others here belong to families who have never been to church for generations, and they inherit a pagan tendency; the whole tradition of their family is against it. Others have what they call "a family temper," and it is quite possible that those who belong to a family that have neither controlled their tempers nor their lusts for years have an inherited tendency to an uncontrolled temper. But while that bias of what we call a sinful tendency affects the will, the whole honour of God is pledged to this, that it shall never be too strong for a person to resist. Heredity is a fact; it is a fact that companionship often corrupts youths; but the honour of God is pledged to this—and every man's conscience and every woman's conscience in this church would bear it out—that in spite of it all we are free. You need not have got drunk that night, you know it; you need not have misled that boy—something told you not to, but you did it; you need not have stolen that money; you need not have gone with the tide and given up your Communion and broken your Confirmation vows; you need not continue that sin which is on your conscience to-night, and which was perhaps brought to your memory at the service this afternoon; you need not. I know that there is not a wrong thing that I have done that I need have done.

And therefore, for GOD's sake, let us be honest with ourselves. If GOD asks our wills, if He calls for us as His children, as His dear children, let us not look up in His face and lie. Do not let us lie, whatever we do; we know perfectly well that we are free to-night to be godly, Godfearing, loving children, or to turn our backs upon Him. We can do either; we are not compelled by anybody in Heaven or on earth. And therefore it is that, knowing I am speaking to free children of GOD who are free to choose GOD or the devil, Heaven or Hell, I give the Call of the FATHER with a better conscience to-night.

Now, let me think over what are the kind of hindrances which may be keeping some here from answering to the Call of the FATHER. I just put myself out of this pulpit, side by side with you (I am putting myself out of the question for the moment; I have got many temptations and difficulties, but I am speaking now as if I was one of you), and I believe the first thing one of you might say is, (1) "I cannot believe in the love of GOD; if I could believe it as you seem to believe it I really would give up my will, I really would respond to such love. If I believed that GOD really said, 'This have I done for thee; what hast thou done for Me?' I would try to make some return." Well, now, I should like, if I had you alone, my brother or sister, to argue this with you. What more could GOD have done which He has not done? If you could tell me of something, write to me, and I will answer on Wednesday night. I cannot think myself of any single thing which GOD could have done which He has not done for me, and for you. I have mentioned some of them already. We will not go over them again. But, beyond that, seeing that I was wandering, seeing that you were wandering, He

sent His Son to be the Good Shepherd to find His sheep. I do not know how it affected you, but it brought tears to my eyes, that last verse of the "Ninety and Nine." Think of that song of triumph ringing through Heaven when the Lord brought back His own. That is what converted St. Paul. St. Paul was a hard man to convert; he was rather proud and self-satisfied, but he was melted when he saw the marks on the Good Shepherd's bleeding side. "He loved me and gave Himself for me," he said. When he believed that, he said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? I am now Thine; I give myself." And if we want to believe in the love of God—and we all want to believe in it more—we cannot do better than go down on our knees by ourselves, and look up at the Cross. "Thou must love Me Who have died for thee" is the appeal from the Cross. And, if I really believe that demonstration of love, then I can face all these doubtful questions as to why God allows this, that, and the other; I can face my trials, my disappointments; I can face all the worries of a great diocese; you can face your home troubles, if you once believe that Jesus Christ there revealed for ever the deathless love of God.

(2) Or perhaps you say, "Well, religion does not interest me somehow." Then there is something wrong with you—that is all—and you must spend Lent in finding it out. When you consider that here we are living for a few passing years on this little planet, —one thing is certain, I am preaching to dying men and women,—when you think that somebody dies in London every eight minutes, day and night, and that in all the darkness of sorrow and death there is only one light, that no one has ever seen any other (we have had to read, some of us, many things which you

will never have time to read, and I will defy any one to find any passage in Aristotle, Plato, or any other writer which gives a glimmer of light on the darkness of the world, the darkness of sin, or the darkness of sorrow, or the darkness of death; there is nothing outside the Bible which I would dare to repeat to a dying lad in Bethnal Green, nothing that would convey to him the slightest hope); and yet this one light in the middle of a dark and dying and sorrow-stricken world does not interest you! Well, you must look into your own life, my brother, you must look into your soul; there is something quite wrong there. I can imagine some one saying—and I sympathise with them—"Oh! I would give my life to believe in that light, but I cannot do it." Yes, that is another story, and I grudge no trouble in the world to bring the light to a man who saw it was the only light and longed to believe in it. If you are in doubt, don't despair. To long for the light is the best preparation for seeing it. You see it is the only light, and you long to believe in it; but not to be interested in it, to think it does not matter, shows such an utter want of imagination, such a selfish outlook upon life—may the Holy Spirit bring home to you what you are rejecting before it is too late!

(3) And that brings me to the third possible obstacle. You say, "Ah, that is just the point. It is too late for me. Why, I have only just come into church to-night partly out of curiosity, and I have not been in church for twenty years." There was a man in our West End Mission—an educated man—who sat up in the gallery of a great West End church, who had not been in church for forty years, and when he heard the cry of Jesus Christ, "I am the Light of the world; he that believeth in Me shall not walk

in darkness, but shall have the light of life," he could not resist it. He came back to the light, he humbled his pride, and he came and had one or two long talks with me, and, thank GOD, he was brought to believe in the light again. So let no one here in East London who has not been in church for twenty, thirty, or forty years imagine it is too late. Some day it may be. But to-night the sister who said to you, "Come to church to-night, and hear what the Bishop has to say," brought the Call of the FATHER to you. And therefore do not imagine it is too late. Why, you may be the hardest Church worker in Bethnal Green before you die. I remember one or two cases in East London. One man who was a very keen atheist became one of our best Church workers when he was converted. And another man, far away in Hackney Wick—a drunkard—was absolutely changed as the result of one of our mission services. And therefore you who have slipped in to-night and are perhaps sullenly, dully wondering what it was all going to be about, if only you would give up your will to-night only GOD knows what He can make of you.

(4) And that brings me to my next point, and that is, What are you really going to do? So often in mission services it is all left so vague. "Come to JESUS, come to GOD." "But what am I to do?" It should be something perfectly definite, and you should not go away with a vague feeling. It is when the will is converted that the man is converted. St. Paul was not converted when he was struck down by the light. He was converted when he said, "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And therefore in answer to the question, "What wilt Thou have me to do?"—and remember Ananias was

employed to tell him, GOD used Ananias for the purpose—I say, first of all, undoubtedly go and kneel down—nay, kneel down here, if you will, in a few minutes, before we are done—and find out what sort of person you are, find out where you are, ask GOD to show you to what you have given your will, whom you are serving now, who is your master. And when you have found out who your master is, then disentangle the will from the old master and hand it over to GOD. Take the Ten Commandments, of which we spoke this afternoon, go through them one by one, and ask, "Have I broken this? Have I broken that?" Keep in a quiet place and tell it all out to GOD. And if you cannot do it by yourself, ask the rector, or some one else, to help you. What are we here for, except to help one another? Then commit yourself. To-morrow morning make it perfectly plain before your family, if necessary, or before your workshop, and the same with any woman here, before your friends —that you are going to be a changed man or changed woman, that you are going to start afresh, that you have chosen GOD, and that your will is handed over to Him.

(5) And how are you to imitate GOD? "Be ye imitators of GOD, as beloved children." I want to be a child of GOD; then I must imitate GOD. Children have to be like their parents. What am I to do if I am to imitate GOD? What do I see in Him? A ceaseless worker. "My FATHER worketh even up to now, and I work." "Work, work, work, for the night cometh when no man can work." What work are you doing for GOD and His people? I look again. What does GOD do? He is always loving to every one, He sends down His rain upon the evil and the good,

and makes His sun to shine on the just and on the unjust. I must be like God; I must be always ready to do kindnesses. I must keep my temper under control, and be kind even to those who are unkind to me. I look again. What does GOD do? What is GOD? "GOD is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Then I must purify my heart, I must purify my life, if I am to be like my FATHER. "He that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as He is pure." I cannot be a child of God if there are dark thoughts in my heart —dark, foul imaginations. I must imitate GOD. I look again. GOD is a great peacemaker. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of GOD." The very thing I want to be! Am I making peace? Am I a peacemaker at home? Am I trying to make quarrels cease where I am? We might look at GOD the whole night; we might go on looking at GOD to see what His children should be like; but we have seen enough to-night. We will look again on Wednesday. Only remember this: if we are to do all this, if we are to come back from the far country into the eternal home to be safe in the everlasting arms, we must ask the HOLY SPIRIT to help us, we must ask the HOLY SPIRIT to give us the courage to witness, and the power; we must come out and take our place as confirmed members of the Church. "As many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are the sons of GOD." And then, full of the SPIRIT, and having handed our wills over to GOD, we can know the peace and the happiness of being the children of GOD, and imitators of GOD as beloved children.

Bethnal Green

WEDNESDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. **"I have been praying for the person dearest to me on earth about the cure of a terrible habit, and, although there appears to be no answer, your words 'Hope and pray on' have kept me from despairing altogether. But what I cannot understand is this: If the person I am praying for seems determined she will not even try and overcome that habit, if GOD will not force her to do so against her will, it almost seems that my prayer, however earnest, will be of no avail."**

Of course that is a very great difficulty, and I am afraid that a great many get tired of interceding for others when it seems to have no effect. I must clearly acknowledge that there seems to be, as you would expect, a limit to the power of intercession for any one person. There is a passage in St. John which says, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." Therefore while I do say hope and pray on, we must admit that we cannot force the will of any one by our prayer any more than God can force it. I have said, that if God was to use His almighty power to force me or you to be good, or to force your friend to be good, He would break His image in us.

Part of the image of GOD is free will. Therefore unforced devotion is what He wants from us. If GOD will not force the will of any one, it is not likely that we can force it; but what I do believe is, that we by our intercession are given a wonderful influence upon it; we are helping to pull that man or woman or boy or girl away from the danger and over to the side of GOD. All those promises would be a mockery if this were not so. Over and over again you find the promise of help in answer to intercession. "If there are fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, or ten righteous, I will not destroy the city"; Moses, holding his hands up in the battle, prevailing more than Joshua, who was fighting, and Aaron interceding between the living and the dead that the plague might be stayed—all these things seem to me to have no meaning unless we have real power. We are kings and priests to GOD. Therefore, my sister who sent in this intercession, I say to you, "Hope and pray on." There have been the most wonderful answers to prayers after years of intercession which seemed to have no answer. I have told you before now of the intercessions for one who was converted from being an active secularist, not because of anything we said, but because his mate in his shop had said years ago, "I pray for you every day; I cannot argue, but I will pray every day, and one day you will see things as I see them." That man, when he was converted and brought over, became one of our best Church workers, and he tried to discover the little friend of his to whose prayers he rightly attributed his conversion.

2. Then comes a question written in pencil on a post card, but evidently a genuine question: "You say that it would not have been right for Abraham to sacrifice his son; then how about CHRIST's sacrifice? Adam's sin does not require such tortures?

Will you explain the Christian doctrine of the Atonement?"

I can only in a few sentences answer that. It is founded on this misapprehension. It was not that CHRIST came

to pay a price to the devil or to pacify an angry FATHER. Sometimes people used to imagine that the SON was merciful, the FATHER stern. It was the broken law of righteousness which had to be obeyed by some one. That is why we took as the opening sermon of the Mission, "With the clean thou shalt be clean," written over the portals of Heaven. No one has kept that law—not one. Somebody had to keep it, no one could who was a mere man. Therefore the SON of GOD, Who had to administer the Law, came to keep the Law. And what we see in the Gospel is the perfect fulfilment of the broken law of righteousness. He having perfectly fulfilled it, and having bound the human race to Himself closer than hands and feet, nearer than breathing, we, because we are one with CHRIST, and, if we keep one with Him, share His victory. Therefore this question, honest as it is, omits the fact that it was a voluntary sacrifice on the part of the eternal SON of GOD. "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O GOD." GOD the FATHER joined in the sacrifice, helped the world and gave His SON. The SON came down perfectly voluntarily to offer the sacrifice Himself. There is nothing immoral and there is nothing unjust in that; CHRIST'S death was the last limit of His obedience. "He was obedient unto death."

3. Can you tell me why GOD only forgives those who repent and yet expects men to forgive each other even when they are not sorry? Why is it? for it is hard to forgive when people are not sorry. If a good man wrongs another, is that man to forgive him until the injury has at any rate been recognised and acknowledged?

This question, whoever asked it, is founded also on a misapprehension. We are told to have a perfect readiness to forgive when that forgiveness will be accepted. It is perfectly true that you may have a forgiving spirit towards somebody, but it is not accepted. That is not your fault; you need not be miserable about it, so long as you are per-

fectly certain that you have forgiven that person from the bottom of your heart. Then you have done your duty, and if the forgiveness is in your heart and the person asks for it, then that forgiveness becomes theirs. But over and over again people say, "I will forgive him if he forgives me," or "I will forgive her if she forgives me." The point is this: we have to begin with ourselves first. If there is a quarrel in any Bethnal Green home, or a split in any Bethnal Green friendship, you who come to the Mission are the person to ask for the spirit of CHRIST to take the first step in healing the quarrel. Put aside your pride. Look at the Cross. Be proud, if you can, when you have looked at the Cross! Then go and make amends yourself.

4. Then come two questions on

Eternal punishment.

I remember what a difficulty this was in Bethnal Green. I remember this was a question I was asked to lecture upon to the men in 1889, for they said eternal punishment was their chief difficulty. I will try and answer this question a little more at length.

Now, the first point is that CHRIST takes the responsibility of using the strongest language Himself on the subject. If you will look, for instance, in the Bible and in the New Testament you will find that all the strongest things are said by CHRIST Himself. There is no good laying the blame upon the Church or upon the creeds. It is the Bible that is the difficulty, and people forget that. It is CHRIST Who speaks about the "worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched." That is the first point. That shows, of course, that it is quite clear there is some tremendous danger of which we are to beware. CHRIST would never have used that language if He was not warning us with tears in His voice of some terrible danger. Then the second point is, that it is never laid down in the Bible, or by any Church decree or statement of any council, that any particular person is finally lost; and Dr. Pusey says —and this may comfort some of you, because Dr. Pusey is

looked upon as the orthodox of the orthodox in such matters—that "No soul will ever be lost"—remember this, you who have been kept away perhaps by the thought of the harshness of GOD—"No soul will ever be lost who has not had the FATHER throw His arms round him, look in his face with looks of love, and has deliberately rejected Him." "They have both seen and hated both Me and My FATHER." That brings us to the third point: that hell is a state. I should be quite prepared to say with an old writer, "When self-will ceases hell ceases." That is, hell is a condition of rebellion against GOD; it is being outside the sunshine of GOD's love. Therefore while a soul is rebellious, while it has another will that is not GOD's will, it cannot be taken to Heaven. It would be a moral impossibility to take some lustful, wicked man out of London and put him in Heaven. Do you suppose he would enjoy Heaven? How could he live in Heaven? All the things he cares for are absolutely opposed to the spirit of Heaven. We must not speak of what is a "moral impossibility" as if it depended on the will or the whim of GOD. Against what then was JESUS CHRIST warning us? I believe this: He was warning us against the awful possibility that we might get into such a condition that we could not turn. I have sometimes seen a man who had for thirty or forty years been so consistently a drunkard, that, humanly speaking, it was impossible for him to turn from it. Or it may be that to another some other bad habit has become like a chain. I believe in always hoping for every one, but you can imagine some one who has such a chain round himself that he cannot turn from his sin. That I believe is the danger against which JESUS CHRIST warns us; that is why He says: "Agonise to enter the strait gate." And it is very remarkable that when some one said to Him, "LORD, are there few that be saved?" instead of answering the question or satisfying their curiosity, He said: "Strive to enter into the strait gate yourself." I feel this, that I can trust my GOD not only with my own soul, but with the soul of every one else. I have not died upon the Cross as JESUS CHRIST

died for them, and therefore it is not for me or for you to set up ourselves to be more merciful than God or more loving than Jesus Christ. I look into my orders as an ambassador and I see the conditions. I am told to offer salvation to my brothers, and I must stick to my credentials as an ambassador. I have boundless hope for every one. But I should be false to my teaching, I should be false to my credentials, if I hid this terrible danger that perhaps you, my brother or sister, in this very church to-night, might so harden yourself against God that you can neither turn to Him in this world nor in the world to come.

5. I must answer this much more shortly. It is about **the Old Testament stories; are they true?**

They are great truths enshrined in a pictorial form, but every single truth which they enshrine is as true as ever. Take, for instance, the Scripture version of the Creation. What does it teach us? It teaches us that the world was made by God—a thing you want to know to-day as much as at any time; that it was made by gradual evolution, step by step; that man was the crown of it. All these things you will find conveyed to us, and that man fell by the misuse of his free will. Do you mean to say we do not want Genesis to-day? What I believe Genesis describes is the crowning of the body of man slowly evolved through the animal kingdom, with all that makes man God-like. Man was made, as described in Genesis, after the image of God, a free personal spirit like God, able to love God, and able to live with God and to imitate God. That is what is described. And therefore the Book of Genesis is alive with the most beautiful teaching. We can never outlive it. So with Noah. You will find those old stories about Noah, the Flood, and Adam and Eve, you will find them in every literature which has come down to us in different forms. But the difference is that in the Bible literature, all these old traditions of the human race, which are as old as we can trace back, showing the common tradition, are given us in the beauti-

fully purified form which makes them the ideal textbook for children for learning about God and His dealings with man. Therefore I thank God that the Bible did not begin with a scientific chapter about Protoplasm, or any of the last discoveries of science. It gives us in the most beautiful picture-form the very truths we want to know to-day.

6. I have a little batch of real Bethnal Green questions; and I say Bethnal Green questions because here they come from the heart of Bethnal Green with the name and address of the writer so honestly given, and thay are just the questions that I used to be asked so often in Bethnal Green. I shall only be able to answer them—because there are eight of them—almost with a word for each.

What is the proof of a soul being contained in the human body? What is the proof of a spiritual world?

Let me answer in my own person. I was a boy at school thirty or forty years ago; not a particle of my present body was there. What was there, my brother? Something not my body. We deceive ourselves when we talk about a man having a soul. A man asked me once whether his soul would come out of his mouth when he died. We do not *have* a soul; we *are* spirits. That is one point. We are spirits who are living in a human body. And therefore the whole argument lies upon the shoulders of the man who disputes that there is a spiritual world. I say that *this* is a spiritual world. I am preaching to-night to some eight hundred or one thousand immortal spirits who come from God, are going to God, and are here for a very few passing years. And therefore the spiritual world must exist for a world of spirits. Science helps us here a good deal. If you blow out a candle it does not go out at all; the force passes into another sphere. Therefore the whole burden of proof lies on those who have to disprove that there is a spiritual world. And you, my brother, would do very well to read the last writers, not, as you seem to have done, those so much out of date; if you

read a man like Sir Oliver Lodge on this particular point, you would find it a great help to your faith.

7. If the soul goes to the place of departed spirits, then the remainder of the body is matter and dies away into corruption.

Well, we are taught that the spiritual body will rise from the grave from land and sea. But this is exactly what St. Paul says. He compares it to burying a seed. As you put a seed into the ground the seed dies, but it springs up into a beautiful stalk. Is the seed the same as the stalk? Yes and no. It is the same life, but it has taken to itself a most wonderful body. That is exactly what St. Paul says will happen. We bury the worn-out body, but the spirit takes to itself a heavenly, spiritual body, and yet not the same as the body which it had on earth. St. Paul's own illustration of the seed and the stalk is the best answer to that question. Science teaches us that human life has been evolved from a lower form of animal life to a higher species.

8. Can the Fall be reconciled with this?

Yes. It is one of the most foolish ideas that man has gone on evolving in unbroken progress. I remember reading a beautiful sermon by Phillips Brooks called "The Giant with the Wounded Heel." It is exactly what man's progress is. It is not unbroken progress, but a giant dragging a wounded heel behind him. That is what history shows us. Are we progressing in a glorious evolution, from glory to glory? We are progressing, please GOD, but with the weakness of original and committed sin pulling us back, and there is the mark of the Fall on every soul in Bethnal Green. Therefore do not be misled and misguided by our popular scientific writers. Be true to the facts of human nature, and you will find the Bible is also true to those facts.

9. Cannot one be high in character, and exercise the restraining power of will, without the benefits said to be obtained from the Christian religion?

That used to be a very common question, and the answer is this. Everybody to-day is living in an atmosphere saturated with Christianity. Your friend is an unbeliever, and you say, "What a noble man he is!" Quite so; I hope he is. True agnostics are often noble men, but they live in an atmosphere saturated with the belief in Christianity for some fifteen hundred years in England. Now if you want to see—this has been acknowledged by every fair thinker—the relative difference between the effect on character of Christianity and of no religion, you must find a virgin soil, some island full of human beings, but where no one has started a religion. Read a little book written about the Melanesian islands, and the testimony of the English admirals who have been on that station for thirty or forty years. Christianity has completely changed the Melanesian islanders. Therefore if you look fairly at the facts of the case you will find that while we gladly acknowledge how many unbelievers who long to believe live good lives, we acknowledge still more the power of Christianity.

10. **Was the Temptation real?**

The Temptation was of course a real temptation, but it is described to us in a pictorial form.

11. **Can the visitation of the HOLY SPIRIT be a feeling? Would it be a feeling that produced the mighty rushing wind and the tongues of fire?**

No, the HOLY SPIRIT is more than feeling. Just as you see the effect of the wind, but you cannot see the wind; just as you see the sails blown out and the ship blown out to sea; so as we look on at a mission, or at any other time, and see souls converted, it is not a feeling we see so much as the effect of the HOLY SPIRIT.

12. **Do you believe that the final revelation of GOD has been given, and that no more revelation will be made in the world?**

I do believe that in CHRIST GOD's final revelation was made. He Who spake at sundry times and in divers manners by others has spoken in these last days by His SON. But I believe every year brings out more glorious depth in Christianity. It is GOD's last word, but every nation that comes in throws more light upon it; and that is the great interest in Christian missions.

13. Why do we read in the Bible that GOD spake in a real voice, "This is My beloved SON"?

The answer to that is that it was a real voice, but only understood by ears attuned to hear. Some said it thundered. And what is most remarkable is that in St. Paul's conversion we are told in one place that the men heard the voice and in another place they heard not the voice. And that used to be brought up as a contradiction in the Bible. But those who have the happiness to know the original know this, that one is in what is called the "genitive" and the other in the "accusative." In the Greek it means that some heard the voice but could not understand it, but St. Paul heard it and understood what it meant.

BETHNAL GREEN

WEDNESDAY EVENING

IX

WORK

"Son, go work to-day in my vineyard."
S. MATT. xxi. 28.

WE look on the hymn, "Return, O wanderer," as the hymn of this Mission, because every word in it is the Call of the FATHER. The Call of the FATHER is the note of the Mission.

Our FATHER's house is full of bliss,
And there is room for all.
Return, return.

I do hope that many here begin to realise a little more that GOD loves them with all His almighty love. We cannot get on, and it is no good speaking of anything else, until we believe this. And some, no doubt, have come out from behind the trees. "Adam, where art thou?" was GOD's call when Adam was hidden behind the trees; and some have come out from behind their excuses, such as "Not being built for religion," and being "as good as their neighbours," and being "too late," and various things of which we have spoken.

Now comes the question: What is the response for to-night? The response at Shoreditch was Trust, the response at Hackney was Prayer, the response in Bethnal Green is Work.

Supposing one of us coming out from under the trees had looked up in our FATHER's face and prayed, now for the first time trusted Him, and said, "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?" That gives us the text for to-night, and the answer: "Son, go work to-day in My vineyard." "Son"—notice, not "slave," not "hired servant." The prodigal thought he was good enough only to be a hired servant, but when he found the father's kiss on his forehead, and his arms round him, he knew he was a son after all. And therefore the FATHER says, "Son," or "Daughter, go work to-day in My vineyard." And the response at Bethnal Green to the Call of the FATHER is "*Work.*"

If GOD is so almighty and so strong, why does He want our work at all? I am quite willing to admit that He could have done without it, but it is perfectly clear that He does not mean to do so. If missionaries do not go out, the heathen are not converted; if the clergy do not come down and work in Bethnal Green, the people's souls are starved; if working men do not work among their fellows, not all the work of the bishops and the clergy can possibly convert London; if women are not using their influence among their children and among their friends, the other women, the husbands, and the sons will not be brought in; if boys are not working for boys, and if girls are not working for girls, then the kingdom of GOD is checked. Ask yourself how has Europe been converted up to now; it was once a completely pagan place; England was barbarous Britain. It has not been converted by the great missionaries whose

names we know. They led the campaign, but I think it is a beautiful thing to remember that it has been converted by the unknown, unnamed witnesses who lived in every age, and who brought in the other people—

> the unknown good who rest
> In God's still memory folded deep.
>
> The bravely dumb who did their deed,
> But scorned to blot it with a name;
> Men of the plain, heroic breed,
> Who loved Heaven's silence more than fame.

What, then, is going to happen to Bethnal Green? And I must say, when I look back twenty years, I thank God for what He has done for Bethnal Green. I think it is only those who have known Bethnal Green for twenty years, and compared the churches of twenty years ago with the churches of to-day, who will realise how God has worked down here. But when we ask about the thousands who do not darken the door of your church, it is you who must bring them. We cannot by ourselves. I love to come here as your Bishop and try and spur you on and to call this wanderer here and that wanderer there. The faithful priests are working day by day. But we alone cannot convert Bethnal Green. You can. And therefore the response that God wants to-night from Bethnal Green is, "Work, work, work, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

(1) And that brings me, first of all, to the daily work of Bethnal Green. I know what is rising in some of your minds: "Work, Bishop! But it's work from morning to night for me." Yes, I know it; I know the work that goes on in these little boot-shops, in those weavers' homes, in the small furniture trade.

Have not I seen you working from morning to night? But I want you to look, first of all, at that little shop of yours, or that little home where you women have to toil from morning to night and look after the children, see to the meals and clean up, and one thing and another. Let us look at that. Do you suppose that St. Paul's tent-making was not part of his work for GOD? Of course it was. He made tents to earn his living and be able to preach the Gospel freely. What you are doing in those busy shops, in the weaving, and in the small furniture places, answers to St. Paul's tent-making. The first thing you have got to do for GOD is to make those places little sanctuaries. I want to read to you the words in which a great poet describes a cobbler boy at his work at that particular trade :—

> Morning, evening, noon, and night,
> "Praise GOD!" sang Theocrite.
>
> Then to his poor trade he turned
> Whereby the daily meal was earned.
> Hard he laboured, long and well,
> O'er his work the boy's curls fell.
> But ever at each period,
> He stopped and sang, "Praise GOD."

Now that is exactly the way to turn a workshop into an ante-room of Heaven I do not mean that you have got to actually say those words; the point is the spirit of them. The men or the women who answer to the Call of the FATHER to-night have to see that their home or their workshop are places in which with their heart, if not with their lips, they say "Praise GOD," like the cobbler boy of the poet. Just imagine the difference to some boy starting work, if he comes to a shop where there is a good

tone. Perhaps at first he does not understand why there is a good tone. There is no bad language, no temptation to drink, no horrible conversation to defile his mind, as there is in many workshops (and the older men are often the worst to blame for it). But he finds a God-fearing spirit; he finds a cheerful, happy body of people at their work, and perhaps he cannot make out exactly why it is. It is because the man at the head of the place fears GOD and loves GOD, and his little workshop is like a little Heaven instead of a little Hell. That is the difference. And so it is with the place where the girls work. How I used to hate to hear many a young girl, when she went out to the washing perhaps, or to help in some laundry work, hear things that she ought never to hear. Why? Because the woman at the head did not love and fear GOD. But if the woman at the head does love and fear GOD, if those who come to work with you never hear an irritable word or a harsh word, but the spirit of love and self-sacrifice is penetrating the place, why, there it is, the Mission has touched your shop, or your little place of business. Or take the home, you mothers with the children, it makes all the difference to have a God-fearing mother in the home, where perhaps there is family prayer towards the evening, and the children are always in the atmosphere of the love of GOD; the children go out to work and meet temptation, but they are well grounded by their mother before they start. We know the difference between the children of a good mother and the children of a careless mother when we see them out in the world. Therefore my first point is: Make your shop, your home, your laundry, or whatever it is, a little sanctuary. "Praise GOD," said Theocrite.

(2) But then comes a time when the day's work is over. Is there no time left? I remember a very busy bicycle maker down in the country—as a matter of fact he taught me to ride a bicycle. We had some talk at the time, and afterwards, though he was a very busy man, he said, "I am not doing enough for GOD; I want to do more for GOD." And that young man ever since, although it is ten years ago, has had a Bible-class of boys in that town every Sunday. Now I want to speak to those who have come out from under their trees, looked up in GOD's face and said "What wilt THOU have me to do?" and have received the answer "Son, go work to-day in My vineyard." I want to know why you should not have a class of children or boys to teach. I want to know why you should not have a branch of the Church of England Men's Society in every parish in Bethnal Green. I want to know why you should not go round and bring that friend of yours or the man you know who is tempted to drink into some Temperance Club where there is no drink. I want to know why you do not go round after your work and call on your sick neighbour and give him a little bit of Christian comfort. I am certain of this, that if you are in earnest, if you ask the HOLY SPIRIT to guide you, and are honest with yourself and with GOD, you will find some work for GOD. And the same with you, my sister. I do not know what your life is, but if you are going to offer yourself to-night as we kneel down and say—

> Take my life, and let it be
> Consecrated, LORD, to Thee;
> Take my moments and my days,
> Let them flow in ceaseless praise—

God will find some work for you. It may be only a sick child to attend ; it may only be a sick neighbour to help ; it may be only some giddy girl or woman to warn and comfort ; and behold there will be something for you to do. I want every soul in this church to look up in God's face and say, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

(3) And then thirdly—and I shall not dwell on this, because I have spoken of it already—there is the work of intercession. Is it nothing to be allowed to move the hands that move the universe? To pray is to work, says an old Latin proverb. Do not lose your chance.

(4) That brings me, lastly, to the spirit in which we must offer our work. So much Christian work is spoilt by not being done in the right spirit. Let me tell you four things—and this shall be the concluding word—which I believe are essential to real effective work for God. The first is absolute humility. When conceit, vanity, pride creep in, when people are jealous of fellow-workers, when they are working for their own end, in that proportion God cannot use them. When they empty themselves entirely of any thought of themselves, when they abase themselves before God with a sense of their own unworthiness, then God can use them. That is the first way. I pray you to offer yourselves to God. Then think of the "buying up of the opportunity," always waiting to see where the wounded man is, like the good Samaritan. You never know—and that is what makes life such a glorious thing—what chance each day is going to bring you of helping some wounded soul. Be on the look out. Perhaps it will come as you walk home from your work ; you may suddenly see the exact

person GOD means you to help. If you are not on the alert and buying up the opportunities you may lose the glorious chance. Thirdly, work with the regularity with which GOD works. "My FATHER worketh even up to now, and I work." Nature works like a machine; it sleeps like a picture. And if we mean to imitate GOD as beloved children according to the text of Sunday night—"Be ye imitators of GOD as beloved children"—every day we shall map out carefully, and we shall persevere right on to the end, taking one day at a time with the steady regularity of those who know every minute is of priceless importance, and who are working with GOD and for GOD. And then, lastly, we shall work absolutely depending upon GOD; simply looking to Him every day, constantly kneeling down when we can, and depending solely on GOD's strength. I am certain we do not do it enough; I am certain that the moment the idea "I am going to do it" creeps into us, there seems to be something which stops the Heavenly SPIRIT, there seems to be something which prevents the solid impact of heavenly force. Those who solely depend on GOD, who lean only upon His heavenly grace, are the workers for GOD who make their mark upon the human soul.

Therefore let us kneel down, let us offer ourselves to work, let us ask, "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and as He answers back, "Son, go work today in My vineyard," let us resolve to work in that vineyard until the LORD comes again.

WHITECHAPEL

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

TO MEN ONLY

X

THE PATIENCE OF GOD

"GOD is a righteous judge, strong and patient; and GOD is provoked every day."
PSALM vii. 12 (Prayer-Book Version).

I HAVE spoken already of the holiness, the wisdom, and the power of GOD. Now I am to speak to you of the patience of GOD. You know, sometimes, as I have said, the world seems mad. People go on thinking of everything in the whole world except GOD. Some men have even persuaded themselves that there is no GOD, and yet the moment is most certainly coming—and we draw nearer to it every single hour of our lives—when nothing will matter at all except this. It will not be so much "What do I think of GOD?" as "What does GOD think of me?" In one sense there is no other subject in the world except GOD. He underlies our politics, our life in the world, our home life, our social life, and nothing matters at any moment of our lives

except in all those things how we stand before GOD. And therefore day after day, and especially during this Mission, Sunday afternoon after Sunday afternoon, I preach GOD as the only real eternal lasting Person in the whole world. And I ask you now to think of His patience.

(1) And think of it, first of all, in connection with Nature. How very patiently GOD prepared this home for His children on which we live to-day. It is one of those many ways in which science—and what an ally science ought to be to religion, and can be if we understand it—has helped us, by teaching us how very carefully GOD prepared His world. It used to be thought that the world had only lasted for a few thousand years, but science has taught us that it took long æons to prepare the world as it is now. And nothing is more touching than to think of the great FATHER —and "the Call of the FATHER" is the motto of this Mission—like a wonderful architect, as He is, not grudging any time, any trouble, in preparing for His children the world on which they were to live. I was reading a book on astronomy only the other day, and it is simply astonishing to me to think that the moon once touched the earth, that in all probability —according to that writer, and I do not pretend to be an authority on astronomy—the moon itself was squeezed out of the earth from those great holes in which the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans now stand; and that GOD slowly and quietly and gently was preparing in that way a light at night for His children who were to inhabit the earth. The more I think of Creation, the more I am astonished at the patience of GOD.

(2) And then I look on to see His dealings with His children. I believe the last time I spoke in this

church was to two hundred Jews of this district, and I hope very much that some of our brethren who in such numbers inhabit this part of London have strayed in to our service this afternoon. And if I am speaking to any Jew, then I say you do not want to be taught—because you know your Scriptures, I hope, well enough without being taught—how extraordinarily patient GOD was with His children, the Children of Israel. Over and over again they rebelled against Him, over and over again He gave them another chance; and you cannot read your Old Testament without seeing and admiring the marvellous patience of GOD in dealing with His chosen people.

(3) But I shall be asked—and this relates to some of the difficulties that have been brought up to me during this Mission—"What about Jael? What about the exterminating wars? What about the sacrifice by Abraham of his son? That was not right." No, as I explained there, and I explain again this afternoon, GOD was so patient in educating the conscience of the world. Even GOD can only get out of each age the morality of which that age is capable, and He bore with these ideas and He taught better ones; He taught Abraham he must not sacrifice his son. And so He led on the human race from their imperfect ideas of what was right, to the full morality of the Christian world to-day, and all with such extraordinary patience, leading them on from step to step. And then when it came to the crowning gift, when the Eternal SON, who was to be the FATHER'S great gift to the world, was to come, how long He waited! You might have thought that if He is going to give it at all, He will give it all at once. Not at all; GOD prepared everything most carefully. There was the Greek language

which was then spread over the then known world, to prepare the way for the missionaries when they started; there were the Roman roads all laid out from end to end; there was the Jewish dispersion, which always formed for St. Paul's preaching a little centre from which he began wherever he was, and it was, to use the Bible language, "in the fulness of time" that the Eternal Son came down from Heaven to earth.

(4) And then notice the patience of God in the method. Whenever Christmas comes round, I confess, when I watch the Babe lying in the manger, it seems to me more and more astonishing that God Who might have come as some great General at the head of His troops, or with some flaming sign in the sky, terrifying the astonished human race—came as He did; when I see Him lying as a Babe in the manger, and think of the patience of God adopting that way of winning the human race, well, I look up and bless the patient God. God is a righteous judge, but He is strong and patient too in taking that method which was the only method by which He could have won the love of the human race—coming down as a little child in the manger, stealing into the heart of the world as only a little child can steal into the heart of the world.

(5) Then we watch—and this will be the great thought of Holy Week—Jesus Christ Himself at work. I went to Oberammergau once, in order to see represented by those reverent peasants—and their reverence was beautiful—the last days of Jesus Christ on earth. As you see the Eternal Son of God led from judgment seat to judgment seat, and never answering back, all so silent, so self-controlled, it is the patience of Christ which is the one thing that stands out above everything; the marvellous star of His patience; and the

patience of CHRIST is the patience of GOD. When I see the servants go up and smite Him, pointing at Him and jeering at Him; see Him on Good Friday as they pass underneath the Cross and say, "Let Him come down from the Cross and we will believe Him," I bow my head before the patience of GOD.

(5) And then come and watch Him at work in Whitechapel, and know that all power in Heaven and earth is given unto Him, and that GOD might come down and show Himself to all those who disbelieve in Him, who use His name in oaths, who drag down to destruction the young boys and girls who trust in Him—and all that goes on in East London, as I have reason to know—and yet patiently sends His Church to plead and to work on, to knock at each door and appeal to consciences and hold missions, all with the wonderful patience which is part of His character; when I see this, then I say it is a glorious thing, the patience of GOD.

II. And yet how easy it is to misunderstand it. In the first place, it is so easy to mistake it for weakness. I suppose, if I have had it said once to me I must have had it said a hundred times, "Either GOD cannot stop what goes on in the world, or He does not care enough to do it." And undoubtedly there may be some even in this church this afternoon who are mistaking the patience of GOD for weakness; or again there may be some who mistake the patience of GOD for not caring enough about it. I venture to say this, that when GOD sees the innocent in London betrayed, as they are betrayed; when He sees some man come home the worse for drink, push his wife out of the way with a cuff or an oath, swear at his children; when He sees men who ought to be bringing their wages home spending them on their own lusts or on

drink, and the little children going about—I have seen them for years in East London—without shoes to their feet and with scarce any clothes on, the heart of God burns within Him. St. Paul says, "Who is weak and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?" And we are making the greatest mistake we can possibly make, my brothers—and mind you I say these things in pure love for your souls, and I speak to myself as well as to you; I am just one among you, speaking as a man to man—I say we are making the greatest mistake in the world if we forget that "our God is a consuming fire." A consuming fire. His love is so great, His love for every individual child that He made is so great, that His heart burns within Him when He sees misled or betrayed one of the little ones that believe in Him. Lately I heard—and it is only a sample of some of the stories which come to me as the centre of this diocese—the story of a poor girl down in this very district who was betrayed by a rich man the other day; it made me thank God that there is a God Who burnt with indignation over that child of His that was betrayed.

Again, it is so easy for us to slip into the idea that this patience of God will last for ever. I turn to the Psalm, and this is what it says: "God is a righteous judge, strong and patient; and God is provoked every day. If a man will not turn, He hath whet His sword, He hath prepared His bow and made it ready." And when I hear of earthquakes, or when the peace—the apparent peace—of the world is disturbed by some startling thing which happens in London, I do believe myself that those things are allowed to happen just to remind us that this world does not go on for ever—not as a judgment upon those upon whom they fall always, God knows that

—but as a reminder to us that there is a GOD behind this passing world. And when I see in London a man with a shambling gait and the lustre of his eye gone, I know that that man has the mark on him, the result of his old sins. When I see a man who was respected and honoured in London go along with an averted glance, dishonoured, despised, looked down upon, then I see that the patience of GOD is beginning to be exhausted, and judgment is beginning to fall upon that man; that the patience of GOD is not for ever, that as He comes round and sees the fruit tree bearing no fruit, He says, "Let it alone this year also; but, if not after that, I will cut it down."

Now our Mission is charged with reality. I do not come round here to preach a sermon, but what I come round for is this: to ask every one of my brother men and myself and the clergy, and every single one who is with us in this church, How do you stand? And I put it to you that the patience of GOD is provoked every day. Are you and I provoking Him? Let us begin with ourselves. I think very often we clergy lose influence because we do not speak as if we ourselves had preached our sermons to ourselves first, and I say this: If as day by day I live as your bishop I am unreal in my work; if I say one single word I do not believe; if I am using my position for popularity, for influence, or for enjoyment; then I provoke GOD every day. He gave me my chance for one purpose, and one purpose only—to save souls for Him; and if I use one scrap of position or influence for myself, then I provoke the patience of my GOD every day; and I ought to go down on my knees and confess it, and say, "GOD be merciful to me a sinner." And what I say to myself I say to you.

Are you breaking—you, my brother, *you*, my brother —any one of these Commandments of God? In Bethnal Green we went through the Commandments one by one. I have only time to pick out one or two now. Is God first—first in our life right through? That is the First Commandment which God gave. Is any one between you and God? Is the love of any person between you and God? Is the love of money between you and God? Is there anything whatever in your business life in the City which you know is wrong and which chokes your prayer? Then you have broken the First Commandment. And I ask you to go down on your knees to-day, before you meet God—it may be the one chance in your life—and tear that out, that you may have God first. Have you made any graven, distorted image of God? I know in the old days in Victoria Park people used to put before me images of God and say, "Your God is like that." People sometimes make to themselves, without admitting it, some distorted picture of God which is forbidden by the Second Commandment. Do you think God spiteful? Do you think God unjust? That is not what God is like, and, if you represent that to the boys in the workshop, you are terribly breaking the Second Commandment. Or what about the third? Do you take God's name in vain? I know that many a man in London never uses the name of God except in an oath. And, mind you, it is just as bad for us who go to church to be unreal in our church-going. The Commandment hits both ways, and those take God's name terribly in vain who are looked on as religious, but who are not really so. I shall never forget the story which I read of a bishop who went out to some far-off town in America, or far away in the bush somewhere in

Australia, and the young men said to him, "There is the founder of our Atheists' Club." He said, "What, that man? Why, that is the best-known religious man in the place." "Yes," was the reply, "but we know him to be a humbug; and that is what made us young men atheists." Or take the Fourth Commandment. Throughout the whole of England from end to end to-day,* through the whole Church and in every chapel too, Sunday is to be spoken of as GOD'S day. How do we use it, and how do we stand? Thank GOD, you are here, my brothers, in Whitechapel Church on this Sunday afternoon, but you may not be here every Sunday; and I do say, GOD as He judges us will want to know what we are doing about His day. I do not say that on Sunday afternoon, later on, you cannot go and see the old mother or the friend when you cannot go to see them on the week-days; I do not say that relaxation in the open air is forbidden on every part of Sunday; but I do say that GOD, having in such a marvellous way preserved this day for us, expects to come first upon His holy day, or else we are breaking this Commandment. Are we, any of us, provoking the patience of GOD by leading astray the little ones of GOD who are entrusted to our care? I have some awful stories brought to me from some of the great workshops and great business houses. I cannot repeat things told me in confidence, and I do not do so; but I do say to you, my brother men who are here, we, the clergy, cannot reach those places, we cannot stand up for the little fellow in the workshop who is having things said in his ears which he ought not to hear; we cannot give the word of warning; but you can, and GOD expects

* This Sunday was set apart for sermons on the subject of "Sunday."

you to do it, and to have the courage to do it. If you go to church or chapel, you provoke Him by your cowardice if you do not do it. I am going on from point to point, but it is not for me to do more than ask you to put it to yourselves: "Am I, who have to appear before GOD and answer to my patient GOD—am I provoking the patience of GOD to-day?" And if any of you brothers say to yourselves, "Well, now, in my home I am not what I ought to be, or I am not so regular at church as I might be, or I am not so strong a witness for GOD in business as I ought to be," then as we kneel down ask to be forgiven for that. Listen to the Call of the FATHER as He calls you to come out and be a better son than you have ever been before. GOD, the patient GOD, will receive you, as He received the prodigal, with the kiss of peace, and you will know yourself again as a child of GOD.

III. And that brings me, in the last place, to point out —and how beautiful it is to be able to finish with this! —the extraordinary patience of GOD with those who come out to be His servants. I do not think myself we could live a day if we did not believe in the patience of GOD with our cold and inattentive prayers. You pray, I suppose, every morning and every evening—I hope you do—but are not our prayers sometimes so cold, so dull, so lifeless! It is only a patient GOD who would listen to them at all. And yet He does listen and hopes for better things. How patient He is as we struggle against our temptations. We fall and fall again, but still GOD waits for us; there is the grace ready, the strength ready.

Who can faint while such a river
Ever flows our thirst to assuage?
Grace which like the LORD, the giver,
Never fails from age to age.

I would ask you if you are trying to be straight, trying to be fighters for CHRIST and His Church, to think more of GOD; do not despair;

GOD shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

If you have GOD with you nothing can break you down. I pass on to you what is the one thing that keeps me going day by day: it is the thought that I have the whole of GOD to attend to me and to give me the grace and help I want every day, and that no problem, no difficulty is too great, for GOD is at hand to help and to solve it, and see me through. What I have you have; GOD has no favourites at all; He no more loves me than He loves you. He loves every one of us with a deathless and patient love. And therefore I do say to you: Throw yourselves on the patience of GOD; He will see you through, He will see you through that hot temptation at the office, that home difficulty; He will give you influence to bring in that man on whom your heart is set, and He will see you through that perplexity in the city. If with all our hearts we put ourselves in the Hands of our patient GOD He will see us through every day, He will give us the grace to die by, as He gives us the grace to live by, and will bring us at last to His eternal home for ever.

WHITECHAPEL

SUNDAY EVENING

XI

THE CALL TO THE HEART

"My son, give Me thine heart."—PROV. xxiii. 26.

OUR message to East London is the Call of the FATHER. As I say at each place, I say again to-night; we cannot go on, unless every one tries to realise that GOD loves him. You, brother, and you, sister, have the whole of GOD to attend to you and the whole of GOD's love bent down upon you, as if there were no one else in the world to love. It is a great spiritual reality upon which we are engaged, and I feel certain of this, that no one of you will get a blessing who does not try to say, "GOD loves me, the Almighty Who made Heaven and earth, so wise, so holy, so powerful, so patient, He knows me by name and loves me better than He knows." And this evening we have arrived at the Call of the FATHER, not to the conscience, nor to the will, but to the *Heart*. "My son, give Me thine heart; My daughter, give Me thine heart."

This brings us to the very heart of the Mission. This mid-Lent Sunday is the very heart of the Mission, and for three reasons. First of all because it is

much more difficult to give our hearts than anything else. A slave can give up his will; you may frighten a man so that he gives up his conscience; but to-night we have got that far harder thing to do; we have got to give up our hearts. And is it not true that it is far harder to control the emotions, far harder to control what we love than what we do? That is the first reason that makes it such a difficult thing to do what we have to do to-night.

And then another reason why it is the heart of the Mission, why really the whole result, you may say, of the Mission depends on the answer for to-night, is because what we do give our hearts to, that we grow like. If you wanted to settle what a man or woman was worshipping you might look to see where they went to, what house of prayer, what place of worship. But that does not really decide the question. Inside every one there is some one or something on which our hearts are set, and that person or that thing to which our hearts turn naturally when we are by ourselves, to which we find our thoughts straying off — that is what we love. What we love, that we worship, and what we worship we gradually become like. And that is the most awful thing about the whole matter, to see a man unconsciously growing like what he worships. Sometimes it happens that a man is considered religious, and is constantly engaged in God's work, but all the time there is something in his inner being, in the secret temple of his heart, which is really absorbing his love, drawing his worship, and on the spread of which and on the growth of which his heart is really set. And often that thing is himself. Often and often in the inner chamber of the heart what the man is loving is himself all the time. And

therefore it is that we have reached—I speak to myself and I speak to you—we have reached the heart of the matter when we say: "What do we love, what do we do really love, on what are our hearts set?"

And then the third reason which makes this such a crucial evening in our lives and in the Mission is the thought that the Almighty God wants our hearts. That explains so many things. I have dwelt on the patience of God. But why is He so patient? Why did He come in the form of a little child? Why did He appear to us in the way that He did, and wait so long? Why, because it would never serve His purpose to terrify us. He might have cowed us into obedience. But the only explanation of the patience of God is that He was not content without our hearts' love; therefore He must woo us, He must woo the love of our hearts. That is the answer to the question which we have had asked so often in this Mission, why God does not crush out free will, why He allows this bad life to continue, why He allows this or that inequality in the world. Because if He crushes out our free will He breaks His image. And this roundabout way, as some people call it, of the Incarnation and the patient work of the Church is followed because God does not mind how much trouble He takes so long as He wins our hearts at last. And therefore when He says to us, "My son, give Me thine heart," He is asking the hardest but the most important thing for which He can ask. I do not know how it is with you, but I feel sometimes a thrill of awe when I think that Almighty God wants my love. I am certain there is much unreality in religion, I am certain numbers of people who even come to church hardly realise what it means. If one really feels no

thrill in thinking that Almighty God is not satisfied without one's love, well, there is something wrong with one's religion.

And that brings me to the most crucial and awful question that I shall have to ask this Mission, and that is: Can a man really love God, can a woman love God? That is the point. We have never shirked, this year or last, the crucial questions of religion; and even if we have not been able to answer them, I believe that one reason why by God's blessing the message has reached hearts outside, even those who have not been actually in the church, but who have read what has been said in the Mission, is because they feel that we do not fear to face the real difficulties which beset religion. And the one I want to answer now is: Can we love God, or is it a great unreality to speak of loving God at all? I am certain I shall help many a timid soul who feels he wants to love God but feels it very difficult, if we face the difficulties, and then see whether it is possible to love God in spite of them. What are the difficulties in the way of loving God?

(1) First of all, we have never seen God. We have seen that little child with the fair hair at home whose presence is perhaps the very light of our eyes and the brightness of our home; we have seen that child; we love that child because we have seen it. We know the dear old father or mother who brought us up; we know every feature of their face; we love them, honour them; it is easy to love them. We know the friend who stood by us in trouble, and whose friendly grasp we reckon on when the hour of trouble comes; we know that friend, we love him. But "no man has seen God at any time," and therefore we should be dishonest to-day if we did not

face that tremendous difficulty in the way of loving God genuinely, which lies in the fact that we have never seen God.

(2) And then, secondly, no doubt awful things do happen in the world. I believe that earthquakes and great accidents and the breaking up of ships full of people make more atheists than perhaps any other cause in the world. And if they do not make atheists they make many of God's children feel unhappy, make them feel "Is it true after all? Is there a God of love, if those little children can go down, dashed to pieces as the steamer breaks up?" Those are real difficulties, the awful things which happen in the world which shake and destroy people's faith. We have had so many questions about this sent up in the course of the Mission in the different churches; and therefore it is that I am bound to face with you what helps there are on the other side.

II. You say, "I can love my friend because I have seen him, but I have never seen God." Now let me answer that by telling you what will surprise you (I think it will), and that is that you have never seen your friend, never. We know God as we know our friends. We have never seen our friend; he is not then flesh and blood which we see; he manifests himself through the flesh and blood, but he is behind the flesh and blood. There is such a thing, no doubt, as animal passion, but that is not true love. If we truly love a person on earth we love the person behind the flesh and blood. That is the difference between true and false love.

> Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,
> But lust's effect is tempest after sun;
> Love's gentle spring doth alway fresh remain,
> Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done.

And when I speak of the pure love which you have for friend, for wife, for husband, for child, for father and mother, I am speaking of the love that goes behind the flesh and blood, that goes on loving them when they have grown old, and their faces are no longer comely, as this world counts beauty. But the person is just the same. Now the great truth is this. I know GOD through His manifestations, as I know my friends, and it is just as possible for me to love my GOD as it is possible for me to love my friend. What are the manifestations of GOD? Let us take them one by one to-night, because I do want to impress upon you all that, as I come round, I do not come round to preach a sermon; I come simply to speak to you what has just as much to be spoken to myself. I have to face these difficulties as you do. I speak as a dying man to dying men and women, but (I believe also) as one who cannot die to those who cannot die.

(1) And the first thing which manifests to me that GOD is a loving Person is undoubtedly His manifestation in Creation. It is all very well for us to think of some earthquake, allowed perhaps, as I said this afternoon, to remind us, who are only too apt to live for the day, and to give ourselves entirely to this world, what a passing world it is. The very fact that the earth will quiver and houses and churches be tossed like playthings before one manifestation of the power of GOD in Nature may show us what a mighty, powerful GOD He is with Whom we have to deal. But turn away from that. Look at every day, a day when there is no earthquake. I say that every honest person as he looks at Nature must see it was made by a loving FATHER. Think of the sunshine, day by day, giving us the delicious atmosphere which we breathe and

without which it would be impossible for us to live an hour—seventy miles of it wrapped round the earth for us to breathe. Think of His placing of the earth so near the sun yet not too near. Think of the happiness of the animal creation; and when people try to spoil your faith by an account of the awful death of animals, ask any naturalist whom you meet whether the animal creation, in spite of their often sudden deaths, are not almost universally happy, having up to the moment of their death no consciousness of what is coming. Watch the swallow wheeling in the sunshine. Naturalists tell us that the animal creation is marvellously happy from one end to the other of it. When I watch the manifestation of God in the sunshine, and the surprises of beauty He has prepared in Nature, and think that the world might have been all without any beauty, I see that I am in the hands of a loving God Who loves me.

(2) Then I look on a little further. Did I find myself alone when I came into the world? Did you? No. We found ourselves in a warm, loving atmosphere which we called our home; translate what I am saying into your own language; think over what God has given you; perhaps a loving wife, perhaps a good faithful husband, perhaps brothers and sisters whom you love, perhaps the friend who means so much to you; as I think thus, I begin to see this is another manifestation of the God Who arranged everything for me here. Am I to love my husband, my wife, my brother, my sister less that I may love God more? What an absurd idea! There are some people who really imagine that God is jealous because they love their brothers, sisters, fathers or mothers. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?" It is the per-

son who is most loving at home, it is the person who is most forbearing, most unselfish, who most loves GOD. And it may be, as we think over to-night why it is we do not love GOD more, it is that we do not love our brother man enough, that we are too selfish, that our hearts are narrowed and we really love nobody. One sometimes comes across people who simply love themselves, who do not seem to have the power of loving a friend or children. How can they love GOD? You have got to begin first, my brother, by opening your heart and loving those whom GOD has put within your reach to love.

(3) I should not be frank with you if I did not say that for myself, if I had only those two manifestations, I should not be able to love GOD. I will tell you why: because I should have no explanation at all of the suffering, I should have no explanation of the pain, such as is found in the London Hospital to-night, nothing to help me when I have to go and comfort people who have lost their husbands, or their wives, or children, or brothers, or sisters. I look to see if this Almighty GOD, Who asks my love, has given any other manifestation which will answer my difficulties, carry me through them, and really make my heart capable of responding to Him when He says, "My son, give Me thine heart." And I find it—and mark my words, no "new theology"—I find it in His manifestation in JESUS CHRIST. It was the manifestation in JESUS CHRIST which won St. Paul's love. St. Paul was a difficult man to win with regard to his love; he was a prejudiced man; he was a Jew; he was a man, no doubt, of exceptional powers, and it was a very great thing indeed to win the love of St. Paul. And when I watch that wonderful man—and I am studying in the early morning a book called

"The Fifth Gospel"*—I find that it was GOD's manifestation in JESUS CHRIST which broke St. Paul's heart. And when you read in one of his Epistles about "Love suffereth long, and is kind," if you think it out, you see that he is thinking of JESUS all the time, and you might read into that chapter, instead of the word "love," the word "JESUS"—"JESUS suffereth long, and is kind; JESUS envieth not; JESUS vaunteth not Himself, is not puffed up, is not easily provoked." It was the manifestation of the Person of the loving JESUS which convinced St. Paul that GOD was love. And when you notice him kneeling abased and penitent at the foot of the Cross, it is then that he says, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me"; and he gave to GOD his manly, loving heart, broken into penitence and devotion at the foot of the Cross.

And now do you not see why nothing but the old theology gives us this revelation? I am surprised sometimes that, when men speak as if it was practically the same thing if JESUS CHRIST was a good man or the SON of GOD, they do not see that every word they say praising only JESUS CHRIST is blackening the character of GOD. Why? Because the better JESUS CHRIST was, the more horrible it was to leave Him defeated by His enemies on the Cross. If JESUS CHRIST was only a good man, whom the forces of wickedness had crushed out, where was GOD all the time? If in that great battle which we see taking place at Gethsemane the foe conquered, and the malice and the crime and the pride and the conceit of the world trampled that sweet, pure soul under foot, and He was never seen again, where was GOD? There is no revelation of the love of GOD in that, and it is only because I believe it was God Himself Who came into the thick

* A study in the Epistles of St. Paul.

of the world's sorrow, and bore it so patiently, as we see Him bearing it on the Cross, that I can go to comfort my mourning friends, and can face the crime of Whitechapel and the East End, and the wickedness of the West, because I believe I have a revelation of the character of GOD Himself which wins my love. And it is because the story did not end there, because death was not the victor, because the devil did not win, and because the Almighty arm was lifted up and Satan was crushed on the Resurrection Day, that I know GOD is victorious for ever. And so it is the manifestation of my Heavenly Friend in JESUS CHRIST, altogether loveable, Who has won the world, —it is that manifestation which makes it possible to love GOD.

(4) But perhaps you say, "Yes, Bishop, but that is only pushing the difficulty a little farther back. JESUS CHRIST seems so far away. If you want me to love GOD, and to give my heart to GOD, you must bring JESUS CHRIST a little nearer to me, and then if I love JESUS CHRIST, I might be able to love GOD." Well, let us take it for a few minutes step by step. What are these five photographs for? I say five, because undoubtedly St. Paul's Epistles are what I prefer to call a Fifth Gospel, and the earliest of all the Gospels —what are those photographs of JESUS CHRIST preserved for? A great deal of the Christian literature has perished, but five photographs of my Friend, my Heavenly Friend, are preserved for me. Well, quite frankly, my brothers and sisters, I do not wonder if you do not love GOD if you never open your Bible; I do not wonder. Surely it is only those who are poring over the photograph of some one whom they want to know better, who get the features, as it were, stamped upon their heart. We must ask whether we

want to love GOD more, we must ask whether we want to love JESUS more. Then I say this. If we do, every day, if it is only for a few minutes, we shall get out the photographs, as men do who have a great friend, and who look at the photographs of that friend until they know the features and lineaments of that face so well. Go down upon your knees with your Bible. It cannot be that GOD gave us this great help for nothing; and, if there is no other resolution—although we shall hope for more—then at any rate let the first resolution you make to-night be: "I want to love GOD more; I will read His Word more, and I will study the face of JESUS CHRIST more in the Bible."

(5) And then again JESUS CHRIST is revealed to me every day in every good man and woman whom I know. I hope I am speaking to some who have some good friends whom they revere, some man who they feel is better than themselves, or some good woman. Do you not realise that that thing about your friend which makes you reverence him or her so much is JESUS CHRIST? He is revealed time after time, day after day, in that lovely charity in that woman, that splendid courage of the man who stands up in the workshop and does not mind what is said of him. It is in the courage, in the charity that JESUS CHRIST shines out as in a mirror. That is exactly what is meant in the New Testament when it says the angels as they look down see in the Church, in a collection, that is of believing men and women, "the many-coloured wisdom of GOD." We were meant to reveal GOD more and more to one another; and the awful fact is this: we either make people believe more or believe less in GOD and His SON JESUS CHRIST. We cannot help it. You have either driven

people away from God or you have brought them to Him. No one can be neutral in this great battle which we fight.

(6) And then, again, take the Holy Communion. When I listen to the Holy Communion Service, or take part in it, I feel I am putting down my ear to a phonograph. No one in the world denies that the Service of the Holy Communion has gone on without a break from Jesus Christ's days until now; whatever they may think of it, whether they value it or not, they admit the historical fact. Therefore I seem to put my ear down to a phonograph into which Jesus Christ spoke nearly two thousand years ago, and I hear still as plainly as if He were speaking directly to me: "Take, eat, this is My body; drink, for this is My blood." The words come out of the beautiful phonograph as if He were speaking them in my ear. And that is one of the things which bring Jesus Christ right into the middle of my life. Are you all communicants? I do not know. I never ask a question about any one to whom I am going to preach, for fear he might think I was preaching at him. I simply say to you, Are you one of those who come reverently and devoutly to the Holy Communion? If not, why not? You want to love Jesus Christ because you want to love God more; you want to have the whole thing a living, bright reality, the thing in your life which begets your love; you want to give your heart to God. Then I cannot tell you a better thing than coming out and being confirmed at the next Confirmation, and then coming on to be a regular communicant all your days. I cannot imagine a more blessed result of this service than to have those Church-people, and I hope all earnest people who want to carry away something, resolving: "I will

come, I will put my ear down to the phonograph; I will give myself to the living CHRIST Who has promised to be present at that holy service."

(7) And then, lastly, we cannot have these things brought home to us, and I am certain we cannot love GOD, except in the power of the HOLY SPIRIT. One of the reasons why we seemed to have such a blessing all through North London last year was because from end to end it was a Mission of the SPIRIT, and we dwelt every night on this glorious thought, that the HOLY SPIRIT would lead us into all truth, take of CHRIST, show Him to us, and cry, "Abba, FATHER!" in our hearts. But O my brothers and sisters, why should not the "Call of the FATHER" be as blessed a Mission in the power of the SPIRIT? The Holy TRINITY are not jealous of one another, they work into one another's work, and the HOLY SPIRIT loves to take of CHRIST and show Him to us, and to cry, "Abba, FATHER" in every one's heart. What then I do pray is that as we kneel down together, the HOLY SPIRIT may shed abroad the love of GOD in our hearts. That is the very thing it is promised that He will do. "The love of GOD was shed abroad in their hearts by the HOLY GHOST Which was given unto them." What am I loving? We will ask ourselves that on our knees. On what is my heart set? What is the purpose of my life? Am I loving myself, am I loving my comfort, my money? What am I loving? If I want to love GOD, I must put GOD first in my life. "My son, give Me thine heart." "Yes, LORD, I will try to give it; I will try to give it to Thee. Grant me the HOLY SPIRIT to enable me to lay every other purpose and object aside that I may wholly love Thee."

WHITECHAPEL

WEDNESDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The first is from a soul who is bound, and has been bound for many years, by the sin of intemperance—a besetting sin. "My mother, grandfather, uncles, aunts, and cousins were all given to this sin." And the soul is in despair. This is the question:—

Is there a SAVIOUR from the power of besetting sin? What is the use of hoping to overcome when the best men own their inability to keep from sinning?

Be certain of this—GOD never gives us more temptation, or allows it to be stronger and greater, than we are able to bear. He has promised that He will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that we may be able to bear it. That is what the Greek means—"*the* particular way." You look into your life; you are oppressed by this or some other temptation. There is one particular way in which you can escape, and the HOLY SPIRIT will show you what it is. No doubt, the first and obvious way for you is never to touch drink. Any one under a temptation like this ought never to touch it; and many of us have been teetotalers for many years simply that we may stand by those tempted brothers, and let them have the help of a real brotherhood and a sisterhood in their hot temptation. We do not know what this temptation

to drink is. We have other temptations; but I say the clear way of escape is never to touch drink at all, to pray every morning against it, and when the temptation comes put up a prayer in your heart for strength to resist it. And the whole honour of God is pledged that that hereditary taint shall not be too strong for God to save you from it. "God shall forgive thee all but thy despair."

2. Then comes a question from a working man in this district.

What are we to do with these three great evils which are spreading over the East End of London, and into which hundreds of young men from even tender age are being led away—drunkenness, immorality, and gambling?

Well, I ask what are we gathered here for? Here are a number of men in this church, and I ask what are we Christian people assembled here for except to fight the devil and these very evils in our district? If these are the special evils, as I expect they are, of this district, there is not a man or a woman here who has not got to enter the ranks and fight. I remember so well—that very sentence reminds me of it—how a boy who has just left Eton and whom I took out in Bethnal Green into the Park, who was staying with me at Oxford House, and who when he first came had no idea of being ordained at all; but when he saw the secularists, when he saw the numbers of people going nowhere, he wrote to me at the age of seventeen or eighteen to say, "After what I have seen, I must enter the ranks and fight; I must be ordained." He showed the right spirit; and what I put to you men here as your duty is: you have got to create such a moral standard in your workshops, in the offices, where you go, in your street, that you shall make these things cease. Take Whitechapel and Bethnal Green: there is no reason why the standard of these places should not be as high as that of any city, or part

of a city, in the world. But you are to do it Look after the boys, shield them, warn them; keep up a high standard yourself, denounce all those devil's lies repeated by men's lips in workshops or office, and gradually these great temptations by the power of the HOLY GHOST working with us shall be trodden under foot, and GOD shall triumph over Satan.

3. Another question is about final rejection.

Is not the word "castaway," which is so often used, rather misleading?

The answer is that "castaway," or the word translated "castaway," is St. Paul's own word. He prays that, "Having preached to others I myself may not become a castaway." And it is an awful warning to us who do have to preach so constantly to others to be careful about our own lives and our own characters. Therefore we are bound to say that the word "castaway" is a Biblical word, and one used by St. Paul. On the other hand, it is perfectly true that GOD wants no one cast away at all. It is quite true that if we are cast away it is our own fault. "O Israel, Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!" And when they read in the Old Testament that GOD hardened Pharaoh's heart, people are apt to say, "What fault was it of Pharaoh's if GOD hardened his heart?" But you must remember in the Old Testament everything is ascribed to the direct action of GOD. And you will find in another passage that Pharaoh hardened his own heart; GOD allowed him, just as He will allow us to do so. In one place it is said "GOD gave them over to their vile affections"; in another place they gave themselves over. And therefore the questioner has hold of a perfectly sound truth. GOD wants everybody to be saved. Those who are cast away have cast themselves away. On the other hand, I cannot say that the word "castaway" is not justified by the Bible, and used in the Bible by St. Paul himself.

4. **How true is it that**

They who fain would serve Thee best
Are conscious most of wrong within?

That answers the question which I did not entirely clear up in the first answer. I suppose, perhaps, no one personally was living nearer to God than a man like Dr. Pusey. Whatever people may think about this or that point in his doctrine, personally, every one admits that he was a most deeply holy man. If you read his life you see that no one had so deep a sense of sin as he had. And it is so with every holy man whose life you read. The holier the man is the more sensitive is his conscience and the deeper sense of sin does he have. Therefore, when people admit that they sin oft, that does not mean at all that sin cannot be conquered—it must not be used as an argument for despair at all; but what it does mean is that the more we live in the light the more that light shows the stains. "And he that hath this hope" (of living very near to God) "purifies himself even as Christ is pure."

5. Then comes a list of questions, which I can only answer very shortly, about the other world. I always have in every Mission so many questions about what is revealed of the other world.

Can the souls of the dead see the actions of the living?

That is not revealed to us. But I think myself that it is probable that they do, because we read that we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses; and I cannot help thinking that St. Paul had in his mind the great crowd who were watching the games, and meant that those who have already run the race and have entered their time of rest, watch with love and interest and prayer the great struggle going on on earth. As St. Augustine says so beautifully, "The Church above loves and helps its pilgrim brothers."

6 **Do feelings of relationship and feelings of earthly joy exist only during the time they are in the anteroom?**

I feel perfectly certain that CHRIST respected human love so much that a mother is still a mother in Heaven, and a son is still a son; and those human ties which were made by GOD and that human love implanted by Him will go on in the other world.

7. **If Dives felt such an interest in his brothers, why did not he go and help to warn them?**

Because no doubt the life in the other world is limited by conditions. He could not go. Shakespeare speaks of "that bourn from which no traveller returns." It is only JESUS CHRIST Himself and those recorded in the New Testament as having come back to life who have returned from the other world. JESUS CHRIST could say, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore"; but clearly Dives was limited by conditions which he could not break.

8. **Have departed souls any communication with men?**

It is not revealed. I deprecate very much a life spent in always peering into the other world. I do not say this questioner has not asked an honest straightforward question, but there is current to-day a kind of spiritualism which is not true religion. Instead of men and women using revealed truths so as to live near GOD—the revealed truths, for instance, about GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST—and worshipping according to these revealed facts, you find them spending hours, days, and weeks of their time trying to get some connection with the other world by an avenue which is not revealed, and which consequently does mischief to their souls.

9. The writer says that, deeply moved on Sunday by the words spoken, he would be glad of this difficulty being removed:—

Are those who leave actually capable of memory? And is there such a survival of the ego as can meet with recognition?

I give two answers to that. In that same parable of Dives and Lazarus occur the words, "Son, remember." And therefore it is clear that, if five minutes after death we are the same as five minutes before, we must have memory. So again, it is not revealed to us what the appearance of those in the other world can be; we should never have understood if we had been told. Our capacities in this world are adapted to the time and place we know, and are not sufficient to understand the conditions of life in the other world. But it is quite clear that the appearances of JESUS CHRIST after His Resurrection were meant to give us at any rate some guidance; He says, "Behold and see; it is I Myself." Sometimes people recognised Him, and sometimes they did not. But it seems to me that those appearances after Easter Day were meant to tell us that we should know and should recognise those who are gone when we see them.

10. The same answer I would give to another question as to

What is meant by the souls of human beings?

I would repeat that it is not that we have souls; we are spirits; we are immortal spirits dwelling in bodies. Some one was speaking to me about the weight of a soul; but as a matter of fact we are spirits; the living person, the ego, is the spirit, and it is that spirit that passes into the spiritual world.

11. **Could our LORD be tempted in all points as we are, when one thinks of the daily sins and temptations we have?**

I have often been asked that question before. "Our SAVIOUR did not have the temptation which I have in my married life," and so on. We are not to understand the assertion as meant in every detail. It would be impossible in

your and my particular lives that our SAVIOUR should have had that particular temptation; but the point is, that He was tempted at every point, and the devil chose what he thought would be His weakest point, as he picks out what he thinks are our weakest points. And therefore he attacked what he thought would be the weakest point in His armour; he thought he might tempt Him to use His spiritual power for human ends in turning the stones into bread; he thought he might induce Him to win, in the wrong way, the world on which he knew His heart was set. He said, "It will not be any harm to do a little act of worship to me, and then you will have the whole world which you came to win." He thought he might lure Him to tempt Providence, because he knew CHRIST had such great trust and faith in His Heavenly FATHER; so he said, "Cast Thyself down, and GOD will give His angels charge over Thee." And therefore our SAVIOUR was tempted at the point at which Satan thought he would break him down. He did not break CHRIST down. It was a real temptation, but CHRIST was without sin, because He did not yield at any point. Now you and I are going to have the full blast of Satan's temptation as JESUS CHRIST did, and the point of the passage is, that because He understood what temptation was, and was tempted fully with the full blast of Satan's temptation, He is a merciful and faithful High Priest Who can stand by us in our temptation. That is what that passage means.

13. **Is not a person in spiritual danger who, not being a member of the Church of England, and openly repudiating her teaching, partakes of the Holy Sacrament in one of her churches?**

It is perfectly clearly an irregular thing to do, and denotes an inconsistent position; but to answer this sort of question, one must know the whole of the circumstances.

14. Then there is the question which is so constantly asked—the sin against the HOLY GHOST:—

Have I committed that sin against the HOLY GHOST?

The answer is, that the sin against the HOLY GHOST is saying, "Evil, be thou my good." It is the state of the soul that lies down in sin, and that does not want to move from a state of sin. "They have both seen and hated both Me and MY FATHER." And the very fact that you are perplexed and distressed and do not want to sin against the HOLY GHOST shows you have not sinned against the HOLY GHOST.

17. Would it be right to go to confession secretly under the following circumstances: A person wishes to go to confession, but if it was done openly it would cause a great deal of unpleasantness, unhappiness, and sorrow between those who love that person very dearly?

No woman, I think, ought to go to confession—that is to say, go to private confession to GOD in the presence of a priest—without the knowledge* of her husband, and no child under full age should go without the consent of its parents. I feel perfectly certain that every faithful priest in the diocese would agree with that opinion of mine. We do not want to have any hole-and-corner business about confession. And it is far better that the confession should always be heard in the open church. The Prayer Book is perfectly explicit about it. I have explained this in one or two places in answer to questions. If you read the opening rubric of the Communion Service you see the whole thing explained. You can have peace with GOD by using the Commandments and confessing by yourself; but, "if any man cannot in that way quiet his own conscience, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister, and open his

* As some criticism has been directed against this statement, I call attention to the fact that I said "knowledge" and not consent. I think that there are cases where a grown woman must take her life into her own hands, but the husband ought to know what she does.

grief." It is medicine for the soul allowed by the Church, but it ought to be carried out under those conditions.

18. Then comes a very simple question. It concerns that very beautiful hymn we have just sung—

Oh! for a closer walk with God.

Is it reverent for people to say they live near GOD?

The answer, of course, is, that GOD is always near all of us. "He is about our path and our bed, and spies out all our ways." On the other hand, we are told, "Draw nigh to GOD, and He will draw nigh to you" Therefore the Bible clearly recognises that, although GOD is in a sense near us all, and we live and move and have our being in Him; yet when the child, with a child-like filial response, returns to its FATHER, the FATHER is able to come and receive him, as He did the prodigal, with a kiss of peace; then they are nearer in spirit than they were before. The spirit has come back to the FATHER of Spirits. Therefore it is quite true to say we grow nearer to GOD. Enoch walked with GOD, which is the very thing we are praying that every one in this church may learn to do to-night.

WHITECHAPEL

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

XII

BIBLE STUDY

"All Scripture inspired by GOD is also profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."—2 TIM. iii. 16 (R.V.).

WE take for our subject to-night the response of the son in a loving study of his FATHER'S Holy Word; and, first of all, let me clear away some misconceptions about the Bible. I am perfectly certain some people to-day do not study and love their Bibles as much as they might because of one or two misconceptions.

(1) One misconception is that modern criticism has in some way upset the Old Testament. Now, it is quite true that further investigation, which was not really possible in former days, has altered the dates, or made it very likely that the dates of some of the books of the Old Testament are different from what we used to think. But, if that is so, what difference does it make? Does it really matter whether the book of Job was written in one century or in a later century? Does it really matter that the last half of Isaiah might have been written by some one later than the first?

Not at all. GOD, the Eternal SPIRIT, Who guided the writers of the Bible—and, mind you, you cannot breathe into anything except a man or a woman—can equally inspire men in every age. Therefore the idea that, because the dates of the books of the Old Testament may be different from what we thought, therefore the strength and the vigour and the message of the Old Testament are done away is a most extraordinary delusion. I have tried to show that the book of Genesis teaches us eternal truths about creation—that GOD made the world; that He made it gradually; that the crown of His creation was man; that man fell by misusing his free will; and so on; and now take one or two of the other things which the Old Testament has to tell us. I would not part with them for anything in the world. I pick out a few that have helped my own life very much. Take, for instance, what Joseph says at the end of his trial and temptation and ill-usage and slavery in Egypt, and unjust accusation there, and all the rest of it—how does Joseph sum up to his brethren his view of it all? "So then," he says, "it was not you that sent me hither, but GOD." I think that is a most extraordinary help to us. There may be some, for instance, who may be saying that things are going very badly with them; like poor Joseph, they are unjustly accused; they are sent away or ill-treated by those who ought to protect them, as Joseph was by his brethren. Look on ahead, Christian soul; some day you will look back, and you will see GOD's hand behind it all, and you will say perhaps to the very people who are ill-treating and persecuting you: "So then it was not you who sent me hither, but GOD." Or take another scene of deathless interest. Was there ever such a lesson of a

religious man who dishonoured himself as Balaam? Balaam blundered on, imagining that he was doing GOD's will, while he was really satisfying his craving to get a name for himself. It was quite true that he was held back by GOD's power from cursing those whom GOD wanted to bless. But the end of Balaam shows that really under the cloak of religion he was all through following out his own selfish purposes, and he is to those who think themselves religious men a warning which we cannot do without. Or take—and I remember how much this comforted me when I was rather timidly going forward to my ordination—that glorious encouragement in Jeremiah: "Say not, I am a child; be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee." Think how that encourages every young priest to go to his ordination when he is wondering whether he will have the courage to stand up in the pulpit and give his message. Or take, for the poor sinful soul who wants to work for GOD, the vision of Isaiah: "Woe is me; I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips"; and then the seraph took the coal from off the altar, and touched his lips: "Lo! this has touched thy lips, and thy iniquity is taken away and thy sins purged," and, lo! forgiven and cleansed, the messenger goes forth to give his message. Or take the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel. That picture is repeated in every mission everywhere held in every parish in London. "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live," and the flesh comes on them, and the breath comes back, and the dead soul is alive again, and they stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army who can fight for GOD.

I give these just as illustrations of the folly of those who think that the Old Testament is played

out, and has no message for the soul to-day, or that it is proved wrong by the critics.

(2) Again, I take another great mistake about the Bible, and that is with regard to the New Testament. It is sometimes thought by those in a panic caused by ignorance that somebody has discovered, in these last fifty years, that the story about JESUS CHRIST is all untrue. I remember how much comfort I brought to a doubter once by saying: "Have you ever heard of the Roman historian Tacitus? Well, he says in his history, 'JESUS CHRIST was put to death when Tiberius was emperor.'" And to some souls in a state of doubt it is like a breath of fresh air when they find JESUS CHRIST mentioned in Roman history. But of course those of us who have had to study in detail something of what has been said about the New Testament know that the New Testament has come out stronger than ever; that those five photographs of which I have spoken—the four Gospels, and that fifth Gospel, the Epistles of St. Paul—have come out from modern criticism brighter and more beautiful than ever, and in them we can see the face of JESUS CHRIST plainer than ever. Of course I cannot now prove all this to you. Perhaps some of you who have only time for simple writings may find a little help in "New Testament Difficulties," which I wrote years ago for East Londoners, published by the S.P.C.K. at a few pence. There is no value in it at all, except it is short and easy to understand, and what learning there is in it is taken from far more learned men than myself.

(3) Then get rid of another idea. The text which we take for to-night is, "All Scripture inspired by GOD is also profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16).

People say: "Do I then get just as much instruction from the book of Esther as from St. John's Gospel?" Not at all. This text does not mean that every part of the Bible is of equal value. There is such a thing as an inspiration of selection. We believe that the HOLY SPIRIT must have guided those who selected these writings to make up the Bible out of the mass of literature which was not selected; but it does not mean at all that because the writer of the book of Esther was guided to enshrine certain lessons for all time, therefore a Gospel like St. John's full of the HOLY SPIRIT is not *more* full of teaching for us. You will get far more good for your souls by meditating on St. John's Gospel than on the book of Esther. Therefore you must not take an unintelligent view of inspiration because the whole Bible is in a sense inspired. It does not mean that you will not find a deeper meaning in one part than in another.

(4) So, again, there is no contradiction between the Church and the Bible. "The Church to teach and the Bible to prove" is the doctrine of the Church of England. The Church to teach. JESUS CHRIST founded His Church, and for the first one hundred and eighty years, practically speaking, there was no Bible in our sense of the word—that is to say, the writings were not collected all together in one book, because those that make up the New Testament were scattered here and there about different parts of the Church. Therefore you must always remember that the Church founded by JESUS CHRIST is the teaching body. Thank GOD! it brings us the Bible in its hands, and it is the Bible that safeguards the teaching of the Church, because the written record prevents the Church from drifting away in its teaching to all kinds of developments which are away from the primitive deposit and

the primitive faith. Let us thank GOD that we have our motto of the Church of England: "The Church to teach, and the Bible to prove"; and they do not therefore contradict one another. I felt bound to say that to clear away misapprehension.

Now comes the question for our souls; I shall have to put it very shortly because the questions took up so much time to answer. Let me ask the question for my own soul: "What do I get by studying my Bible with prayer to the HOLY SPIRIT every day?" I get, first of all, a deeper realisation of the presence of GOD. I agree with that person who said to me, "How can any one have a belief in the love of GOD who never opens the Bible?" As I read some of those beautiful passages in the Bible which tell me that the hairs of my head are all numbered; or that "ye are of more value than many sparrows"; that describe the love of GOD in the self-sacrifice of CHRIST on the Cross, every passage of it deepens my belief in the love of GOD. Oh, my brother—if I am speaking to some one who never opens his Bible—make your resolution to-night to take out your Bible from beneath that very cover where it has been so long in your house, and on your knees turn to the New Testament and read some of those beautiful promises and descriptions of the love of GOD. The first thing it will do is to remind you of the love of your Heavenly FATHER, which is the message of this Mission. Then, again, I find that reading my Bible expands my imagination. You know we are in such terrible danger of slipping into what was described, in a very good sermon preached in St. Paul's some time ago, as getting shut up in a school of ethics "where angels never minister, GOD never inspires, and miracles never happen"; a narrow world

indeed. Whereas, what does the Bible open out to us? Think of this glorious statement: "We are come to Mount Zion and the Heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of angels." We are come to it; and you find religion dull! You who perhaps find your life dull, what you will find by kneeling down with your Bible is a world of Heavenly realities which open out to you. There is not an hour's dulness to the man who reads his Bible. When the young man asked Elisha what they should do against so many enemies, Elisha said, "LORD, open Thou the young man's eyes"; and he opened his eyes, and behold the mountain was full of chariots and horses of fire round about Elisha. The truth of the matter is that we are come to this glorious world, we are in it now. Heaven begins now, and the Bible fires our imagination and makes us feel as if we were already in Heaven while we are on earth.

And then, again, what comfort there is in the Bible! You mourners, you who have lost your child, I say you will find comfort in the Bible. When I am with some one in great distress, or when any parish priest is with some one in great distress, we take out our Bibles and we turn to the passage, "In My FATHER'S house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." Or we take that beautiful passage which tells us that, when JESUS CHRIST comes back, the dead in CHRIST shall rise first, and then ends, "So shall we be ever with the LORD." I do not know how in hours of trouble or trial I could myself find comfort but for the Bible, or what comfort I should have for other people.

Or take Hope. Do you want to have the helmet of hope? Then read your Bibles, read this glorious promise, "We are more than conquerors through Him

Who loved us." I appeal to all my fellow priests here whether that does not fill them with hope for their work.

Then, again, do not neglect the warnings of the Bible, e.g. "Struggle to enter in at the strait gate." There are some people who take all the comfort in the Bible and leave the warnings. There may be some soul who wants, not comfort at all, but warning. "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." Do not forget that. Young man, you who are what you call "sowing your wild oats," you will reap wild oats and nothing else in the world.

Lastly, "Scripture," we are told, "is profitable for instruction in righteousness" as to the sort of life we ought to live. Happy are the pure in heart, happy are the merciful, happy are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness; they shall do this; they shall pray; they shall intercede; they shall be baptised; they shall be confirmed; they shall come to the Holy Communion. You can find in the Bible step by step, the instructions in a righteous and godly life.

So make your resolution to-night: "I will not any more neglect my Bible; I will read a little of it every day; I will ask the Holy Spirit to bring it home to me; I will carry a verse in my heart up to the workshop every day, and turn it over in my mind; I will feed on it; I will go on Sunday to a Bible class, and have the Bible explained to me; I will spare no time or trouble to make it a living book to me that I may be afire with the Spirit." Make, then, this one resolution to-night—I speak to those now who I assume have returned and have made their peace with God, and want to make their lives a response afterwards—"I will read my Bible; I will make it a living reality all my days; I will attend to its warnings; I will take its comfort; I will sun myself in its hope."

STEPNEY

SUNDAY MORNING

XIII

THE CALL OF THE FATHER TO THE BODY

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the HOLY GHOST Which is in you, Which ye have of GOD? and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: glorify GOD therefore in your body."—1 COR. vi. 19, 20.

MY message to Stepney is the Call of the FATHER to the bodies of His children. Glorify GOD, not only in conscience, in will, in heart, but glorify GOD in your body. And that makes us of course think about our bodies, and it is the very thing I want you to think about this morning. There is only too much tendency to treat our bodies as something apart from religion altogether, to be almost ashamed of having a body.

(1) And therefore the first thing I would ask you to notice about the body which GOD has given us, is the extraordinary beauty of the body as an organ of life. I really sometimes think that people must be mad when they really imagine there is no GOD, or persuade them-

selves there is not. Is it possible that the human hand, the most marvellous thing I suppose in the world, could really have come about by accident? Could a number of atoms have thrown themselves into the human hand so perfectly adapted for all the delicate and varied work which the hand has to do? Or take the eye. I am one of those who believe that GOD used the process of evolution in forming His world. We have spoken already of the patience of GOD; but to believe that, however slowly it was worked out, the eye was really never meant to see or the ear never meant to hear—well, say what you will of the credulity of believers, the credulity of unbelievers is far greater. And after all these years there is no real answer to the question of the Psalmist: "He that made the eye, shall He not see? and He that made the ear, shall He not hear?" And therefore I carry about with me, as a child of GOD, something which ought to be telling me every day of the extraordinary care, the wonderful skill, and the marvellous wisdom of our Heavenly FATHER. The body is a most beautiful thing. What a wonderful mind GOD must have, for having thought out and with such marvellous skill created the human body!

(2) And then the second thing which I notice about the body is that it was never meant to sin, and that there is as a matter of fact no sin in the body itself. I think that perhaps may surprise you. People are so very apt to lay the blame upon their bodies and say, "I am only following human nature"; or "If I had not got a body I should not go to the bad"; "I cannot help this"; and therefore it is just as well to face quite clearly that there is no sin in the body at all. There is nothing wicked but a wicked will—nothing.

JESUS CHRIST had an entirely human body. There was no respect whatever in which His human body differed from our own. It was a real man's body He had, and yet He never sinned at all. He wore the body, He lived out His life in the body from start to finish without any sin at all. And therefore there is no sin in the body itself. I think that it may to a great extent help those of you who are very much worried by the presence of blind instincts in the body to know that they are not sinful in themselves unless you yield to them. Temptation is not sin. The body has its lusts and its passions and its instincts, but there is no sin in that. The sin is when the will consents to use the body against the commandments of GOD. And therefore the second thing about this wonderful body of ours is that there is no sin in it; and it was never meant to sin at all. It was meant to be used in loving, pure, holy service to the Call of the FATHER, Who made it and gave it us.

(3) And we may go further. The body is a very holy thing. The reason I chose this verse for the Mission message this morning is because it lays stress upon the sanctity of the body. "Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the HOLY GHOST?" An awful thing about preaching is that as you look up into my face as I speak to you, through your eyes the HOLY GHOST is looking up at me. Your bodies are temples of the HOLY GHOST; the body is a most holy shrine, a holy sanctuary, a holy thing. And yet do not I carry you with me when I say that it is through our bodies that all our worst sins and falls have come; that the devil in tempting the children of GOD uses the avenue of the body to deprave and stain the souls of GOD's children? Do you say, "Oh! but the Bishop does not know how my tongue has led

me astray; he does not know the things that tongue has said, and yet I know that it was given me to praise God and to speak about the words of God and the works of God; he does not know the stories that I have told about other people; he does not know how my body has led me into sin and made me indulge wrong thoughts and wrong longings and wrong ideas; he does not know all that, or else he would not speak like that about the holy body and glorifying God in my body." Well, it is just that which I want you to face this morning; I want you to ask yourself this: Is your body handed over to God, that He may work through it and use it, and take your lips to speak for Him, and send your feet on messages of love for Him, and let your hands work for Him? Or does your body belong to another lord, another lord who is using it for his own purposes, who uses your tongue to say in the ears of boys things which stain their souls for life; who is using your body to drag you down in your imaginations and in your ideas; who is using your body perhaps to tempt others with. And therefore I want our first question, as we kneel down together presently, to be this: "Am I misusing or abusing in any way this sacred body which God gave me? Worse still, is it a curse to others? Am I—and I must ask this question—am I by drink, by unnecessary use of alcohol beclouding the brain that ought to be so clear? Am I laying the seeds of early death, as thousands, literally thousands, of men and women in London are doing, by often secret use of strong drink? Am I lying in my workshop with my tongue? Am I sending ill-natured stories about the parish against some one else? Am I ready in a moment to burst out, as if the Holy Ghost was not

within me, against some one who has excited my wrath? If I was heard in the streets, say, on Saturday night outside my own door, would it be thought I was using every member of my body for the glory of GOD?" That must be the first question.

Then comes the second: "Is any one in the world, in Stepney, is any one up at the place where I work, any one in the great firm or great business house where I go in the week-day, the worse for my influence?" It is a terrible thing how a careless word or a wrong gesture or a wrong touch may wake up for years in some one else the fires of passion which we cannot quench; and it is an awful thought that we are in one another's care, we children of GOD, and that we cannot pay too much reverence, too much loving reverence, to GOD's children, and especially the young among His children. He has said strong words about it: "If any one shall cast a stumbling-block in the way of one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better that a millstone were cast about his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea." And, therefore, if there is on your conscience, brother or sister, any such sin this morning, go down upon your knees with us as we sink upon our knees in a moment or two, and say: "GOD be merciful to me, *the* sinner."

Or, again, have we our bodies in perfect control in matters of sleep? One of the reasons why the children of GOD must rise at the appointed time to have time for a little prayer and praise before they start upon their work is because they must consecrate their bodies. If that tongue is given primarily for the praise of GOD, it must speak a word of praise before it speaks another word during the day. If that head was given chiefly to be bowed in reverent

worship of the loving and Almighty FATHER, then there must be at least a word or two of prayer to ask for care and strength and protection during the day. And GOD looks to see whether the body is under the control of the SPIRIT or whether the body is dragging down the SPIRIT. Ask yourselves, "Am I up in time every morning to say a word of prayer and praise before the day starts? Or does dull sloth hold down my body? Should I let my body hold down my spirit?" Or take our behaviour in church. I know I am speaking mainly, no doubt, this being a morning service, to regular Church-people, most of whom are not drawn away by drink or by coarse sins; but I would like to ask them, Is your body reverently worshipping GOD? The reverent kneeling attitude in church, the attention to what we are doing, the recalling of ourselves to the awful and yet blessed thing we are about to do when we kneel down; the absorption, in worship, on entering the church, of our whole mind, our whole brain, our whole being—that is what happens to one who is using his body to glorify GOD. "With my body I thee worship" comes in the centre of the marriage service, and a beautiful old expression it is. "With my body I Thee worship" must be first said to GOD; and, when we are asked why we Church-people think so much of the sacraments and the outward sign in Confirmation, why JESUS CHRIST, Who was the least a formalist of any one who ever lived in this world, appointed Baptism and the Holy Communion, why is it when you come to be confirmed you bow your head and the hands are laid upon you, the answer is, that the whole system of CHRIST's Church according to the will of GOD is designed to teach and train the body. This is why we have rules of fasting for Lent; that the body may be trained to be the servant

of the spirit. This season of Lent goes right back to the very early days of Christendom; that Friday shall be a day of fasting and abstinence is laid down in the Prayer Book, and, although we must adapt the method of our fasting to what is possible in different conditions, we must never forget that JESUS CHRIST said Himself, "When the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast in those days."

And therefore I come lastly to ask, What is to be our response to the Call of the FATHER this morning? I say frankly, first of all, Penitence. If you think over the past for a moment, and remember in what ways the body has led you away in this or that form of self-indulgence—and I purposely do not speak of the grosser forms of vice—I believe that with real penitence you will go down on your knees and say, "GOD be merciful to me."

And then after that there is a call to consecration. What is the real cure of wrong-doing? Not to cease only the wrong-doing, but to "learn to do well." If you read the Epistle to the Ephesians, you will see they were told there to lie no more; but they were not to be content with that; they were to "speak truth with their neighbours." "Let him that stole steal no more"; but they were not to be content with that: "Rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good." In other words the expulsive power of a new affection is what is wanted to drive out the bad. I think that of all the striking warnings of the New Testament perhaps the most awful and the most pitiful is that of the man who had the evil spirit driven out of him. It left the place "empty, swept, and garnished." "Then came seven other spirits more wicked than the first and entered in and dwelt there." What does that

mean? Why it means this, children of GOD, that we must offer the temple of our bodies to be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD.

Return, oh HOLY DOVE, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,
And drove Thee from my breast.

"We must fill life," as Faber said, "with good works till it flows o'er the brim." This tongue which has offended must be consecrated to the service of GOD. Never utter a word that is not charitable, loving; speak the messages of GOD, and tell out the praise of GOD. With this brain that GOD has given; "whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report, think on those things." These hands—is there nothing these hands can do more for GOD than they do? That is what every child of GOD must ask. The hands must not cease to do evil; they must learn to do well. The feet—are there no messages of love to wanderers from the fold in this district on which your feet were meant to carry you?

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, LORD, to Thee.

That is the only real response of GOD's children, and, if that is made this morning, the experience of thousands tells us this, that the lower temptations slowly die away in their strength as the whole being is handed over to a higher service, and that the body becomes more and more sanctified and meet for the Master's use.

Stepney

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

XIV

THE ENERGY OF GOD

"My Father worketh even up till now, and I work."
St. John v. 17.

WE thought in Shoreditch of the holiness of God, in Hackney we thought of His wisdom, in Bethnal Green we thought of His power, in Whitechapel we thought of His patience, but for Stepney I must say we have a side of God which, in a district where I have watched the work of God for fifteen or sixteen years, I would rather speak of than any other, and that is the energy of God, the boundless energy of God. Our God is a consuming fire of energy. I think I can illustrate this best by thinking over the mistakes we often make about the sun. Some one perhaps said to you this afternoon—and that is why you are here—"Are you going round to hear the Bishop this afternoon?" "I don't mind if I do," you replied. And some friend asked you to come round, and you came along through the bright spring sun-

shine here, and perhaps did not think very much about the power of the sunshine, or the extraordinary energy that is put forward by the sun every day. It was not until I myself studied a book on astronomy that I realised what the sun did for the earth every day. Those gentle beams which we feel are really great flames of fire millions of miles high, and while we perhaps imagine to-day that we sustain our own life physically on earth, if it was not that the sun's blazing orb held the little earth in the hollow of its hand, fostering the life of every plant by its light, driving out the bad, evil influences that would destroy life on earth, there would never be any life on this earth at all! "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and I will give thee life"—that seems to be the cry of the sun every morning to the sleeping earth. Now, if we make a mistake about the sun, is it unlikely that we make a mistake about GOD? You have come sauntering, in your cheerful, East End way, into church out of kindly feeling, and full of good wishes for the church, wanting to back up what is going on in the district; but I want you to leave this church, my brother—and I am speaking to you one by one, as if you were alone sitting there in the church—I want you to leave this church in touch with the tremendous energy of GOD. I preach GOD, this Mission, as the only real, lasting reality in the world. I have talked of the sun, but GOD is the Creator of the sun; and when this earth has been, as it one day will be, drawn into the sun, and all that there is in it burnt up, as both astronomers and the Bible tell us will happen, when that sun itself and all the other blazing orbs have passed away, GOD will be there.

They drift away; ah! God, they drift for ever;
But overhead the boundless arch of Heaven
Now fades to night, now blazes into day;
Oh! God, my God, thou wilt not drift away.

Now there are five parts of the energy of God directly relating to every single one of you which I want to put before you this afternoon.

(1) God is a consuming fire, first of all, of love towards you. I know what some of you men say—we have had it out in other churches—"Well, Bishop, I send my children to Sunday-school every Sunday afternoon; the missis goes round to church; I don't often come, I know. Say a prayer? Well, no, to speak the truth, not often. What about my life in the shop; do I swear, do I drink? Well, I won't say I don't." Now what I want you to realise is this, God does not want your children only, your wife only, or your sister, but God wants *you*. I want you to realise that the consuming fire of the love of God is for His son, and that you, sitting there in church, unknown by name to me, are known by name to the Father, and that God has sent this Mission to *you* and that He really spoke through the friend who invited you to come round, because the eternal God is full of the consuming fire of love towards you. That is the first thing. "My Father is at work because He is full of love for every one of His children."

(2) Then, secondly, with what tremendous energy does God protect His child. Every law of nature requires a continual application of force, and the fire of the energy with which God guards and protects and stands by His child is the second proof of the energy of His love.

(3) Thirdly, with what wonderful energy and power He destroys the works of the devil. We know what they are here. Did I not have a question from a working man in Whitechapel: "What are we to do," he said, "about the gambling and the prostitution and the drink which disgrace this district?" The SON of MAN is come to destroy the works of the devil, and, with a hatred which we have not realised yet, GOD hates the sin and the crime and the selfishness of this district—ay, and of the West End too; the East is no worse than the West. When GOD sees some lad led away in London, when He sees some poor innocent girl dragged down in our streets, when he sees the young man deceived by the older man, who says, "Every one does this; it is only human nature," GOD's hatred blazes towards the sin. And mind, the GOD with Whom we have to do is a consuming fire; and the whole wrath of GOD is turned against the man who misleads, or destroys the good in, one of His children.

(4) So again GOD shows His energy in infusing good all day. There is a story in "John Inglesant" which describes a scene when he was away in a foreign country. He was in a house in that southern land where every temptation was before him to yield to the lusts of the flesh; he was in a house where every one did yield and thought nothing of it. And GOD infused into his soul—what? The memory of a day long ago when he was kneeling in a little church, which I have seen myself, called Little Gidding, one of the little holy sanctuaries where Church life was fostered and kept alive centuries ago. And he remembered the time when, as he knelt at the Communion in that Little Gidding Church, CHRIST had seemed to come to him at the Sacrament and

speak to him, John Inglesant himself; and the memory saved him. The HOLY SPIRIT infused the good in time. And I had a case only the other day in London. A young man, little more than a boy, had come up to London. Men were leading away that boy with the common cant of the day, that cant of the day which is the devil's lie, but which is leading away numbers of young men to-day: "You cannot live a good life and keep in health." Those of us who have lived to some forty-five or fifty years of age know what a devil's lie it is. And he was almost led into moral sin, but just in time GOD flashed before him the thought of his sisters and his mother. He rushed from the scene of temptation and said, "I cannot sin with that sight before my eyes." GOD infused the good into that boy's heart in time to save him.

(5) Fifthly, GOD is full of tremendous and loving energy in planting righteousness down in a district. What about the Old Boys' Association here? I have always believed in that so much because preventive work is far better than rescue work; because your late rector here—one of my best friends now alive—when he wrote a book called "From Marriage to Marriage," was perfectly right in saying that, if only the Church was strong enough to carry out GOD's idea, the child which is brought to the font ought to be so infused with the grace of GOD, so guarded by the power of GOD, so protected by the Church working in GOD's name, that there should be no breakdown, no downfall, and therefore no need of being rescued later in life with a wrecked constitution, for the boy would grow up "in favour with GOD and man." And therefore in His deathless love, in His protecting care, in His hatred of evil, in His infusing

of the good, and in His persevering foundation of His kingdom in a place like Stepney—I see our GOD as a consuming fire of energy. And when you ask me how I know this, I say I know it in the best way: because what JESUS CHRIST was GOD is. If you ask me which is the verse of the Bible which has brought me daily the most comfort, I would say this one: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the FATHER." And when I watch JESUS CHRIST at work, and especially during this Passion Week and Holy Week; when I see the trouble He took to go and sit at the well that the woman of Samaria might come out and He might be able to speak to her soul and convert it; when I see Him go up to the young man—"JESUS beholding him loved him"—and speak the word to him; when I see the trouble He took to try and save Judas, and even at the last moment said, "Friend, wherefore hast thou come?"—by the word "friend" trying to touch his heart before he betrayed Him—when I see Him bearing with St. Peter, in spite of his denying Him, forgiving him, and appearing specially to Peter, to save him from despair—then I see GOD's individual care for souls manifested in JESUS CHRIST. Then again, when I watch JESUS CHRIST purging His FATHER's temple, taking the little knot of cords and driving out all the gamblers and money changers—and so often we imagine Him a kind of good-natured being, so easily appeased, with no special hatred for anything—and as I watch Him driving before Him from His FATHER's house all those who defile the holiness of that place, I see the energy of GOD cleansing His temple. Then, again, I watch JESUS CHRIST infusing good. I know sometimes at these Mission services I have men who have been reading books which often make them

inclined to be sceptical about Christianity; and to such I would say, Listen, if you are tempted to disbelieve in CHRIST, to what the historian Lecky says. He says, "The record of those three short years has done more to regenerate mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the plans of statesmen"; and John Stuart Mill said, "Live so that JESUS CHRIST would approve of your life." And when I think that to-day the miracle of Europe is this—that JESUS CHRIST stands to-day ten thousand times stronger and more influential than any other person in the whole of modern Europe, then I see what infusing good means, and that in the moral energy of JESUS CHRIST infusing good into the world we can discern the moral energy of GOD.

And that brings me to the two questions I have to ask you. The first is: What return are you making to the ceaseless work of GOD for your own soul? and secondly, What are you going to do after this service is over to work with GOD for the good of the world?

And, first of all, what return are you making for this ceaseless love of GOD towards you? One day we have to meet GOD face to face. Every man will give an account of himself to GOD. We shall have to answer the question, "What return did you make to the manifestation of My love in CHRIST? 'Thou must love Me Who have died for thee.' That was My great manifestation of love: what have you done towards Me in return?" And if it has to be a story of no prayer, no church, GOD's name used in oaths, and perhaps never in any other way; boys in the works unprotected and uncared for; young men who have gone astray because of your example—what an awful return, and what an awful account that would

be! And I believe in my soul that GOD has brought you here to-day that you may give a better account. Over and over again it is through thoughtlessness, from ignorance, from believing what your mates say, that you slip into these things; and therefore I do ask you this afternoon to make your first resolution: "I will put aside out of my life the things that the Bishop says GOD hates." "I know the Ten Commandments," you say. Well, at Bethnal Green with a church full of men, like this, we went through them one by one. We have not time to do that now, but I ask you to think over that first Commandment. Is GOD first with you? Then do you make any distorted image of GOD, as the Secularists used to make in Victoria Park—the image of a cruel GOD, distorting GOD's real character? Is that the GOD you worship yourself, or imagine GOD to be? No taking of GOD's name in vain; no hypocrisy. The man who comes to church and lives a very different life at his work takes GOD's name in vain as much as any man who swears. What about Sunday? When were you last in Stepney Church? You say to yourself, "GOD gave me Sunday to think about my soul; GOD loves me, GOD cares for me; GOD gave me my wife, my children, and my daily bread; I will spend part of Sunday anyhow in worshipping GOD." What about your home? Is it a happy home? If not, whose fault is it? Are the wages taken home for the wife on Saturday? How much is spent in drink? What did you do with your last week's wages? "Thou shalt do no murder." Is any soul alive the worse for my being alive? "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Is the life pure and clean? Are you keeping the laws of GOD, which are the laws of happiness? "Happy are the pure in heart." It is

perfectly true. The people whom I see happy today are those who live a pure life, married or unmarried. And the married ought to live as pure lives as any. Live by GOD'S commandments, and there is no impurity whatever in married life. It is GOD'S own appointment to those to whom He calls to that vocation. "Thou shalt not steal." Are the accounts perfectly honest? Could they be shown at any moment up at the works or at the office? "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Are you free from lies and scandal about your neighbours? "Thou shalt not covet." Life is not merely eating and drinking and getting through the day. Life is meant for other things. We spoke of the body this morning, the life of the body. What is the tongue given for but to praise GOD? What are the hands given for but to work for GOD? What are the feet given for but to carry us on some message or work of love? Therefore your answer to the first question, when we pray to GOD in a moment, must be this: "I will make some return; I will try and keep my life clean and pure; I will try to keep my home what it should be; I will take care of my children that GOD has given me; I will be a better husband to my wife; it shall not be my fault if I have an unhappy home." Start better this afternoon. "I will put GOD first; I will come to church the first time I can, and kneel down tomorrow morning and say a prayer and start a new life. If my FATHER worketh like this for me, I will make some return to Him in my own soul."

And then, lastly, what do you suppose must be the return I make to GOD for others? Do you imagine that the Bishop and the clergy, or the little band of Church workers, are going to convert Stepney to GOD? There is another reason that GOD called you

here this afternoon, and that is to use you, to work through you, in this great district of Stepney. Why should we not have a kingdom of GOD down here to compare with the kingdom of GOD in any part of the world? There is no reason at all. I know well enough that the working man's home in East London, if the man is sober, if he is God-fearing, if he puts GOD first, is as happy a home as any in the world; and we are only deceiving ourselves when we put our unhappiness or wretchedness on our circumstances. There are two homes side by side: one of a man who drinks, children unkempt, clothes torn, no boots on their feet, wife looking miserable, no furniture; in the next place the man has the same wages, the same money coming in, with clean respectable children, the home the picture of happiness; one the ante-room of Heaven, the other the ante-room of hell. Which home are you going to have—especially you boys and young men who are starting life? Which home will you have? Therefore I say GOD is calling His sons to build His kingdom down here. I want to see in this district a strong branch of the Church of England Men's Society. I find there are thirty or forty thousand members all over England. It was the Church of England Men's Society, fourteen branches, which worked up the men's service we had at Hackney. You come from different parishes here. I want to see in every parish in Stepney a strong living branch working for GOD. I believe in working together. But perhaps you may say, "Well, if GOD wants all this, why does He not do it Himself?" Just as He can do nothing for you unless you respond, He cannot do it for others unless you work with Him. Surely, to have a class of boys and see them grow up loving

GOD, giving you their friendship and their gratitude for what you try to do for them; and later, after ten or twenty years, because of your teaching, seeing them self-controlled and honourable men, is something worth doing. It is a grand thing, when you see your poor mate going home drunk every night, to say to him, "It is no good going on like that; come round to my temperance club," and to see that man a changed character in two years because of what you have done for him. When I was at Oxford House for nine years, I had some two hundred young men from Oxford and Cambridge, and they would tell you, if you asked them, that they never knew what real pleasure was in life until they gave up their summer holidays to send children into the country in connection with a holiday fund, or work at a boys' club night after night in Bethnal Green.

And therefore GOD, Whose energy is boundless, and of Whom CHRIST said, "My FATHER worketh even up till now, and I work,"—asks our work. I want to rally you, my brothers, in the cause of the children, in the cause of the boys, in the cause of the homes of East London. I want you not only to set an example yourself, but to say, "Whom shall I bring to the Wednesday service?" There is a start for work for GOD. "Whom shall I bring, who does not care about these things, to hear what is said on Wednesday night?" Make your workshop a little sanctuary where the boys hear no bad language, where people can come and feel there is GOD working there; and say, "Before I give my great account to GOD, I will do at least one stroke of work every day for GOD until I die."

And so I leave you with the great appeal, the Call

of the FATHER. We belong to a GOD of Whom we ought to be so proud. He made us out of pure love; He keeps this home going for us by ceaseless energy of love, guarding us day by day, giving us the best blessings we have got. He only asks us to love and serve Him with our whole heart. We will kneel and give ourselves back with all our souls to GOD for ever.

STEPNEY

WEDNESDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. I answer first to-night one written by a working man, who says he never had a day's schooling in his life; and although, as he says, he is clearly not a very educated man, he has asked one of those numerous questions which I have been asked through this Mission, about the soul and the other world. He asks:—

Is it right to say about the soul of man that it is an immaterial and immortal spirit?

He says that this is what he constantly answers to those who ask him this question. Well, that is a direct answer, a very good answer; but I think I should put it this way. As I have said on other evenings, it is not that we *have* souls; it is that we *are* spirits, we *are* immortal spirits; and if that secularist mate of yours, with whom you say you have to argue very often, tries to convince you that you are nothing but your body, you should ask him what it was that was at school thirty years ago. He knows that he was at school, but not a particle of his body was at school. What was at school? Something was at school. Therefore it is quite clear that we ourselves are not our bodies. There is something which is not our body, because our body changes every seven years. Therefore it is the fact that we

are spirits who dwell in bodies, and I think it is a misleading way to put it to say a man *has* a soul. Some writers are trying to decide what the weight of a soul is. The whole thing is absurd. We are immortal spirits and cannot die.

2. The next is another question about the next world, of which I have so many always; this is about the intermediate state.

Does the intermediate state depend on how far we have served GOD while on earth?

I believe we get our best explanation of that from the sentence about Judas, "He went to his own place"—that is to say, he went to the place which he had prepared for himself by his life on earth. It is the character that matters. This will answer other questions which are connected with this. It would be impossible to take a man who had only found his delight on earth in low pleasures, who had perverted his nature—to take him and put him in Heaven. He would be miserable. Judas went to his own place. Each of us goes to our own place, the place which we prepare for ourselves by our life on earth.

3. Do we grow in grace in Paradise that we may be more worthy to stand before GOD'S throne?

Certainly, I believe a soul in the sunshine of Paradise grows in grace; and it would be quite unnatural to suppose that there was no growth in grace. That child taken perhaps long ago from you, and taken to JESUS' garden of the soul in Paradise, is growing, we believe, in all lovely graces and virtues at JESUS' feet.

4. If our sins are here confessed and forgiven, for what shall we be judged? Is our whole life brought up again and made known to all at the last day?

The answer surely is exactly the same as to the previous question: we come up for judgment—the people that we

are when all is said and done, when the sins which are truly confessed and forgiven are put away. "I will remember *them* no more," it is written; but it is the person that is to be judged. When the judgment does come, we are judged as characters. All the little judgments, all the mistakes, all the failures, all the hopes, all the successes, all the work we have been led to do, all the work we have not done, all that makes up the person at the end, the long end; that is the person who will stand before the judgment seat of GOD.

5. **Need we fear death?**

What I feel certain of is this: that as we have grace to live by day by day, so we shall have grace to die by when it comes. I am certain the experience of the parish priests working in this parish would agree with me when I say that out of the numbers to whom we have ministered as they died, we cannot remember, when it came to the point, many who were at the end afraid to die. It is a sign that GOD gives us grace to die by as He gives us grace to live by.

6. Then comes a question about our LORD'S nature, and that is

If, as the Creeds assert, CHRIST be Very GOD of Very GOD, how was it concealed during those early years so that people had no idea of the Holy Person Who was with them?

But we are told in the Scriptures that CHRIST emptied Himself of His glory. That is the whole point, and it was not until He began working His miracles in Cana of Galilee that it is said "He manifested forth His glory." And therefore it was clearly necessary to the Divine purpose that He should hide His Divine nature and put Himself on our level, so far as possible, to fight our battles with the same weapons—prayer and dependence on GOD—which we have; it is said in the Bible itself that He emptied Himself of His glory that He might carry out His great work of salvation.

7. Then comes the most difficult question (because clearly one which is most puzzling to the writer) of all we have to-night. That is a question on my answer of some nights ago about free will: "If God made men of free will, then if they are free to do what is right they must be free to do what is wrong, and to that extent God parted with His omnipotence. He will not work a miracle to crush our will. If He stretched out His almighty arm to crush free will, then He would break His own image in us." That was an answer given a week or two ago to a question really why God did not prevent people doing harm in the world. The writer asks quite naturally:—

Is there any good in praying to GOD to protect us from evil or to guard us during the night? Are not all those prayers in the Litany a mockery?

The answer really is this: that God is all-powerful, almighty, and that He one day will be completely victorious over all evil and over all wrong. "Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the FATHER." But this is a fallen world, and is always described in the Bible as a fallen world, and the fallen spirit, Satan, has power for a time to work evil and mischief in the world; therefore we must none of us judge the real desire of God or the will of God according to what we see happening in this world. There is a great fight going on between the good and the evil. Undoubtedly evil is a terrible power for a time, but, by our prayers to God and our working with God, and putting ourselves in the strength of the energy of God of which we have spoken, we are able to break down to a great extent the power of evil. Therefore it is clear that there can be no cut and dried answer to the question; I could not say myself whether in answer to our prayers, for instance, it would be possible for God to liberate that soul who is, say, in this church to-night, blinded by Satan at present. Why? Because if that soul sets itself against the power of God and the power of our united prayer, there is a limit to

the power of prayer. That is to say, there must be a response and an effort on the part of the soul. And, when we turn from that to the pain and the suffering of the good, I have often said, and I say it frankly again to-night, I could not myself believe in the love and the goodness of God if it were not for the Cross; but, when I see the Son of God, Who was perfectly good, lying on the Cross and suffering, and hear God's verdict: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased"; and when I see how He suffered pain, then I know perfectly well this: that, although we have to suffer pain and sorrow for some reason which we do not know, God has come into the thick of the world to bear it. He comes like a great general among his troops to bear the worst with us; then I can suffer with God. A little child was told she must lie on her back and not move for years. She replied, "It is an honour, Bishop, to share God's pain."

8. Then comes one of our East End secularists, who asks me frankly—he calls himself "Fairplay"—three questions:—

(*a*) Is the mention of CHRIST in Tacitus genuine? (*b*) Sunday was the day of the Sun, taken from the heathen festival; was there not, therefore, a Sunday before the Christian era? (*c*) Is it not wrong to say, "I can modify, without breaking, the law of gravitation"?

The answer to these three questions is this: (*a*) Our friend, if he is here, has made a very common mistake between Tacitus and Josephus. It is a passage in Josephus which is controverted and which I never quoted, because it is not certain. The passage in Tacitus, where Tacitus, the Roman historian, says "Jesus Christ was put to death when Tiberius was emperor," has never been questioned by any one, as he will find if he consults the British Museum. I did so on one occasion, and the answer

was that no one has ever doubted that particular passage. (*b*) It is quite true that Christianity takes from the old heathen festival the day of the sun and other heathen festivals and sanctifies them; but the point is this, that it was not a day of rest in the old days, and it was not until Constantine in his day, three hundred years after CHRIST, put forth an edict in which he said, "Let all labour cease on the venerable Sunday," that the great gift of rest from labour on the seventh day was granted to the slaves and the other members of the Roman world. To this, of course, the Jews added their Sabbath, but it was Christianity that purchased that seventh day for the workers of the world. (*c*) Then about modifying the law of gravitation. The point is this: if I have free will in a reign of law, as GOD's puny viceroy, is not God going to have the same freedom Himself in a reign of law, GOD Who gave me my own free will? And that argument is not touched at all by the question.

9. Was not the Mosaic code too stern?

Moses's law may seem to us stern, but it was a great improvement upon the laws and customs before. For instance: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" sounds very hard, but it is better than "ten eyes for an eye," or "ten teeth for a tooth," which was the old custom. Moses's law brought in a modification of what was in the world, but the Christian law is of course higher and more merciful than Moses's law, though in some points stricter. For instance, on the question of divorce. "Moses for the hardness of your heart gave you this precept, but I say unto you," JESUS CHRIST said, and then gave us the Christian law of marriage.

10. Have not many people suffered a worse death than our Lord?

That is a doubtful statement, because the pain of crucifixion is the most awful pain in the world. But the point is

not the amount of suffering He had, but *Who* suffered it. And therefore you are misunderstanding the point. It is not that the salvation of the world depends on our LORD JESUS CHRIST suffering a worse death than any one; the point is *Who* it was that came and shed His precious blood upon the Cross.

11. Is it not vain repetition to go on praying for an answer that never comes?

CHRIST prayed over and over again in the same words, but He always said, "Not My will, but Thine, be done"; and that is the spirit of Christian prayer.

12. Is it fair to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation?

If we visit a children's hospital, we find it is a fact that those poor children have to suffer for the sins of their fathers. And perhaps it is one of the things which make you curse in your heart most the brutal lust and selfishness of man when you see the result on some innocent child in a children's hospital. But the point is this: we are treated as one family; the whole human race is joined together in one family. We are told to say, "*Our* FATHER," not "*My* FATHER." Therefore we cannot help influencing one another. It is part of the plan; we are brothers and sisters. And if we were not brothers and sisters we should not be saved by the death of JESUS CHRIST. The only way in which the death of our Elder Brother avails for us is because we are one family and joined with Him, and therefore down through the very connecting links by which the mischief has gone, by which we are hindering and harming one another, through those very channels flows down the life-giving power of JESUS CHRIST. If you claim to be treated as a unit by yourself, you must be saved by yourself, and you will not be able to save yourself. Therefore the fact that humanity has what is called "solidarity" makes our salvation by our Elder Brother possible.

13. Should we feel the awfulness of eternity?

I dare say we do not think enough about it. I agree with the person who sends up this question that sometimes we are too careless in talking about "for ever and ever." But at the same time it is a thing which ought not to frighten us. After all, eternity has begun; time is eternity begun, and yet to-day—we take one day at a time—we put our trust in God and go on; that will be the case through all eternity. I think it would be a much more awful thing to think we were going to cease to exist altogether. I think nothing is more terrible than to think that a living soul would be obliterated and cease to exist. We are promised, if we are faithful, a deathless life in a pure and beautiful home. I think that is a better prospect than to die like a dog or to cease to exist altogether.

STEPNEY

WEDNESDAY EVENING

XV

CONFIRMATION

"Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the HOLY GHOST."—ACTS VIII. 17.

BEFORE I take any verse or text to guide us as to what our Response to the Call of the FATHER is to be to-night, I want you to think with me as to what sort of response we want. We are getting now towards the close of the Mission. The first thing we want, it seems to me, is some way in which the good intentions which should spring up in many hearts may harden into a strong lasting resolution. That is why in so many missions of ten days which are conducted in one church we have resolution cards at the end. Just as the molten metal when it is hot is run into moulds and then allowed to get hard and stiff, so we certainly want as our response to-night some resolution which shall permanently affect our characters, and not let the Mission simply end in emotion or warmth of feeling. It is said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Then, again, we want something which will commit us before the world. I remember so well a talk I had

in this very district at a mission many years ago with a Nonconformist, who had been converted by the ministry of a neighbouring chapel. He came to see me and have a talk with me after one of my mission services. I remember his description of his own conversion so well. He had been an ungodly, gambling, betting man; he often used bad language; he was a workman in one of the great factories down here. He had been converted, and quite loyally he stuck by the chapel the ministration of which had converted him; but I remember he said, "I tell you, Mr. Ingram, it was an awful thing to have to be baptised in a white sheet before two thousand people. But," he said, "I committed myself then, and when the minister walked down the street with me before my old friends, and they saw me and knew what I had done"—I can remember with a smile, as I think of it, the expression he used all those years ago—"*that* was a crucifix." What we want is something by which we are committed. "Commit yourselves" were the last words of a great missioner once to a congregation of his mission people. It is one of the best things in the world, when a man knows that he means to change his life, to say so; when he goes up to the workshop next morning, let him commit himself before his friends, let him get rid of that cowardice that holds him back, and do something to show his colours. Therefore, in our resolution to-night our response must be something which commits us before other people to a change of life.

Then, again, it must be something which gives us more strength; if we are to have a real response it must be something which will bring into our souls Divine strength, in order to enable us long after the Mission is over to be brave, clear, resolute witnesses,

who persevere. I can remember a tailor and his wife who, before one mission years ago, had never said a prayer for thirty or forty years, but concerning whom the vicar wrote to me years afterwards and said, "Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So remain steadfast communicants—a true monument to the Mission." And we cannot have that unless there is some way in which, as we make our Response, there shall enter into us a strength which is not our own.

Now, then, I come to the text. This is exactly the state of things after the first mission of which we have any account at all. Philip had preached a mission in Samaria, and "when they believed Philip preached good tidings concerning the kingdom of GOD, they were baptised, both men and women." And it is said "there was much joy in that city." "Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of GOD, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the HOLY GHOST: for"—notice this—"as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptised in the name of the LORD JESUS." Now comes our text: "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the HOLY GHOST."

Do you not see that coming forward to be confirmed was the Response in the Apostles' days? It is coming forward to be confirmed which is the Response which will fulfil all those three conditions of which we spoke. It is a definite and clear thing to do. Any one who says "I will come out and be confirmed" cannot be said to let the Mission vanish in weak and vain emotion. When you come to be confirmed you stand up and you say "I do" before a churchful of people; you have committed yourself

as much as our friend committed himself when he was baptised in a white sheet before two thousand people; you have stood up as a soldier not ashamed of your colours and vowed yourself again to the service of GOD as a fighter for His kingdom. And then, thirdly, it fulfils the condition that down upon you in all your weakness comes the falling of the HOLY GHOST. There are some people who try and make out that there is nothing in Confirmation except standing up and confirming your baptismal resolutions or promises, and I think that partly comes from the rather unfortunate play of words, in the preface to the Confirmation Service. But if you read the Bible, you will find that the Bible speaks very plainly about Confirmation. "Then laid they their hands upon them, and *they received the HOLY GHOST*, for as yet He was fallen upon none of them." Or in the nineteenth chapter: "Have ye received the HOLY GHOST since ye have believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any HOLY GHOST." Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the HOLY GHOST. And as we look at some other passages, we find that, combined with Baptism, it is called sometimes the "sealing" or the "unction." And when we come to our own Confirmation Service I think, as Bishop, that one of the most beautiful moments of the whole service is when the candidates are kneeling in front of me, and I say the words of our beautiful service, "Strengthen them, O LORD, *with the HOLY GHOST the Comforter*." That strengthening "with the HOLY GHOST the Comforter," that is the Confirmation—and then again I pray over them, "Increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace." What is asked for is a giving of something by GOD to us, and that is the

central part of the Confirmation. Therefore I repeat I cannot imagine a more beautiful response to those who want to come back to the FATHER, who have heard the Call of the FATHER: "Come out from the unclean thing, and I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty!" than the humble, penitent, loving child, hearing the call, forsaking sin, and coming forth to be confirmed. I pictured in the early part of the Mission the prodigal coming home—I am sure we shall never get tired of it; I pity the man who gets tired of the story of the Prodigal Son—the father running forward, kissing him, putting the best robe on him—"Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hands and shoes on his feet, for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found." In that lovely Confirmation Service you can almost see the FATHER doing it. There are the hands on the head—the human hands are merely the symbol of the hands of GOD—the seal, the ring put on his hand, just as the prodigal received the ring on his hand, the robe put on him, the best robe, and what better robe can we have than the falling of the HOLY GHOST upon us? The shoes on his feet make him ready to run errands of love in the world. A confirmed person is a missionary and a priest to GOD. You can almost see at the beautiful Confirmation Service the FATHER clothing His son with all these things and welcoming him home. Therefore it is that I cannot imagine a more lovely end to the Call of the FATHER than that every soul who has heard the Call of the FATHER should make up his mind to be confirmed.

But I can imagine some one saying: "Oh, but I am too old; I saw my little child confirmed in Stepney Church not so long ago, but I am too old." Why, it

was in this very church after a Confirmation on Palm Sunday that a little boy brought his mother on the next Palm Sunday; and when I saw her I said, "I am so glad to see you have come to be confirmed." "Yes," she said, "my little boy kept saying to me, 'Why are you not confirmed, mother, as I was last Palm Sunday?'"

Or perhaps you say, "It is not so much that I am too old, as that I do not see the use of it. I am a converted man, and I do not see exactly what good it can do me." I only say this: study your Bible again, and see whether GOD has not used outward signs in His work towards men all through—the pillar of fire by night, the outward and visible sign of His protecting care; or Naaman ordered to bathe in the Jordan: Naaman was too proud: he said, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" A man might say to-day: "Is not this clever review, is not this clever magazine, better than all the simple teaching of the Christian faith?" It may be, but there is no healing in it. That is the point. However, his servants, who loved him, persuaded Naaman to go to the river Jordan, and he was healed. Again, our LORD JESUS CHRIST put clay round the eyes of the blind man, and said, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam." The blind man might have said, "What is the good of the water of the Pool of Siloam to blind eyes?" It was the outward sign of obedient trust; and the blind man came away seeing. When we ourselves shake hands with our friends we give an outward and visible sign of our friendship towards them. Similarly we believe that in the Church GOD uses outward and visible signs to-day, because He claims our bodies, and wants to come into the visible world as far as

He can to show that He consecrates the body as well as the mind, soul, and spirit to His service.

Or, again, some one may say: "Yes, but I am too shy to come and be confirmed." But remember "He that is ashamed of Me and of My words, of him will the SON of MAN be ashamed when He comes in the glory of the FATHER and the holy angels." And there is no answer to that. If confirmation is right, and if you are convinced by reading the Bible and the teaching of the Church that it is right, then, if you are afraid to face it, you are being ashamed of Christ. There are hundreds who have faced far worse than that, and who thank GOD that they had the courage to do so.

That brings me to my last question, and that is: Supposing—as GOD grant—you desire to make this great return, what are you to do, and how are you to do it? Now let us speak especially to those souls in this church of whom I have spoken, who are at present in a state of mortal sin. I say, my brother or sister, for GOD's sake do not leave the church to-night before that sin is confessed and forgiven. We kneel down in a moment for one last prayer; when we are on our knees, say, "Yes, oh GOD, I will put that away; I see I was deceived; it was wrong; I made that man sin against those he should have protected; I have been a sinner myself; I see I have been deceived and misguided." The young man will say, "Oh, I see what I have done; I have allowed this body that was given me to be sacred and holy, I see I have let that drag me away from GOD; GOD forgive me!" In other words, self-examination and repentance is the first thing; then confession to GOD—I have said this often in the Mission before—either by ourselves, or, if we cannot by ourselves quiet our conscience, then to some priest of GOD who will help us to make our

peace with GOD; then restitution: there is great hypocrisy in confessing a sin if you mean to do it again. You must make all the restitution you can to the person or persons whom you have misled or injured; then amendment of life; of course, in common honesty, by GOD's grace, resolving never to do the sin again; "by GOD's grace I will not waste my life like this, but take up some work for GOD in this place." Put yourself under instruction; that must come next. You must be taught why you believe in GOD and CHRIST; what the Church is. We all want a good deal of instruction, and the more we learn the more we find we ought to learn. I wish I could think that we were all better instructed in Church principles and Bible principles than we are. Church doctrine is Bible truth, if you only study the question. And then when you have done all this, then at the appointed day you will find what a gloriously happy time it will be. You will come down to church; you will first of all stand up and make your profession before many witnesses, and seal the great break which you have resolved in your heart to make with your past; and then you will kneel down, and all the powers of Heaven, as it were, will be gathered over you, and the great windows of Heaven will open. "Prove Me now herewith, saith the LORD of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." And then all will pray, "Come, HOLY GHOST, our souls inspire"; and, in answer to the prayers of the thousand people, down upon your meek head will fall the HOLY GHOST in full power at the Confirmation, and you will go back full of power, and of the HOLY GHOST, to live your life, and there will be "great joy in that city."

Bow

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

(PALM SUNDAY)

TO MEN ONLY

XVI

THE SACRIFICE OF GOD

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—St. John iii. 16.

I COME here to Bow to preach what I consider the grandest message of this Mission. I have spoken of the Holiness of God, of the Wisdom of God, of the Power of God, of the Patience of God, of the Divine energy of God, but I preach to-day the Sacrifice of God.

> Ride on, ride on, in majesty,
> In lowly pomp ride on to die,
> Bow Thy meek head in mortal pain,
> Then take, O God, Thy power to reign.

That is the old theology, that is the faith which has converted the world, that is the faith of the martyrs, that is the faith of the writers of the New Testament,

that is the faith of the missionaries who brought Christianity to what was then barbarous Britain, and I for one say, "Thank GOD, that is my faith to-day."

Now I have to say a word or two concerning a book written by one for whom personally I have a high respect and affection, a most good and kind-hearted man; but I feel it my duty—as every paper that you read is full of talk about this "New Theology"—to point out one or two important points in which I for one—and I speak only for myself, as a man among men—feel that it empties the old Gospel which won my heart of almost all its power.

(1) And the first question is this: Who was JESUS CHRIST? Now you may pile up any amount of epithets about how good JESUS CHRIST was, but you have finally to take your choice between two things: either He was a very, very good man, or He was the Eternal SON of GOD; and to me that makes the whole difference in my religion. If JESUS CHRIST was only a very, very good man, I do not know what He could do for me or you. "JESUS is GOD, and so are we"—that was written in the very book that I have studied with such care. And therefore the first difference is that I for one cling to the old Christian faith that JESUS CHRIST was the Eternal SON of GOD, and, unless He was, away from me goes the power of Christianity.

(2) Then, secondly, I come to the question of the sins of the world and the sin in myself and the sin in you, and I ask myself this: Is it true that the devil is only a vacuum? Is it true that evil is an undeveloped form of good? I think I know my own heart better than that. I say, with the great Dr. Dale, that great Nonconformist of Birmingham, whose splendid book on the Ephesians was one of the inspirations of my life, I say that the power of evil is

too virulent, too hot, too strong, too mischievous to be an undeveloped form of good. And I should like to carry you with me in this. Is that temptation to drink an undeveloped form of good? Is that hatred that comes into your heart for some one an undeveloped form of good? The Bible has another description of it. The lusts and the lying and the gambling and the cruelty and the malice that you and I see in London—what the Bible says about them is, "An enemy hath done this." The enemy that sowed the tares is the devil. And you know quite certainly that the devil is never more active than when he is shamming dead, and we cannot possibly play into his hands better down here or anywhere else than by trying to persuade ourselves that the great enemy of human souls is a vacuum. And therefore, awful as I know the belief is, I still believe that you and I have to fight every day in our own souls, and also in the world outside us, with "spiritual wickedness in high places," with a spiritual enemy who hates GOD and hates us because we are GOD'S children; and you and I have to stand shoulder to shoulder in this tremendous battle, and we cannot make a greater mistake than in thinking that we have killed our enemy already.

(3) And that brings me to the third point. You and I live in a world of suffering and death. There is one thing I know about you, brothers, as I look into your faces: I am a dying man myself, and am speaking to dying men. I have not forgotten how one Sunday in 1890—just such a day as this, a lovely spring day—I was summoned down from Oxford House to a place not very far off from this church, in the neighbouring parish. There I saw a young man just about the age of some of you young men

—twenty or twenty-one—gasping for life. I went up to him—I had been fetched by his young brother who was in one of our clubs. I said, "Well, brother, have you ever said a prayer?" "No," he said. "Ever been to church?" "No," he said. "Have you ever been to chapel?" "No," he said. "Have you ever been baptised?" "No." He had about an hour and a half left of life; and I remember how I prayed over that brother, spoke to him of our Gospel to the best of my poor power, told him about the SAVIOUR of the world Who came down to die for him; tried to help him to make his peace with GOD, gave him a blessing in GOD's name, left him, and he died. I went on just a few yards down into another street where there was another young fellow, about seventeen, also, I was told, dying. I said almost exactly the same words to him; asked him the same questions: "Have you ever heard a sermon?" "Once in the service connected with the Boys' Club at Oxford House." I prayed with him, I baptised him, and he died. I am not likely, with scenes like this, to forget that I live in a world of death. Even now I spend all my spare time with the sick and the dying. Now my point is this: Has GOD done anything or has He not? Has He been "on the hills like gods together," as Tennyson says, "careless of mankind," or has He sacrificed Himself? Has He done anything, has He borne any part in the pain and agony of the sufferers in the London Hospital; has our GOD borne anything of the sort Himself? Well, I tell you frankly, if He had not, I could feel no love for Him at all. But my Gospel, which I believe to be the old Catholic Gospel of Christendom, is that GOD came down Himself into the thick of the suffering and died Himself.

"See the blood blind My eyes, the scourge fall on Me," is what He says on Good Friday. And that fact, although it does not explain *why* I should have to suffer and *why* we should have to die—I do not pretend it does—makes the whole thing different to us who have to suffer and die. He has borne the worst with us, as I have often said before, like a great general on a hard campaign. Such a general might say to his soldiers, "I cannot explain to you why it is so hard a campaign—you would not understand—but I can bear the worst with you; I can share your rations and lie on the ground with you." Every one would follow that general to the death. God speaks to us—"I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now"—they are the very words which Jesus used—"but there is one thing I can do, I can come and bear the worst with you, I can share with you all that you have to bear." I for one could not follow a rose-crowned Apollo that never dipped his finger in the world's anguish, but I can and will follow to the death "a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief." And in the gospel of the sacrifice of God I have got what helps me more than anything with the dying. A poor little girl of fourteen to whom I had to tell the bad news (she was playing about my garden at Fulham for a fortnight previously) that she must lie on her back for two years without moving, if we were to save her life, looked up in my face and said, "Well, Bishop, it is an honour to share God's pain." These were her very words. And it was because the sacrifice of God went home to her that, with a patience which is still one of the best lessons that I have received in life, and with a sweetness that lasted to the end, she laid down her bright little form upon the bed, from which she

never moved till quite suddenly, in GOD's good time, He called her to Paradise.

(4) I turn, fourthly, to the question of the Atonement for sin. I do not wish by a word to misrepresent the author's meaning, but, so far as I can understand, the teaching concerning the Atonement is that it was a great and loving act of self-sacrifice which melted the world into an imitation of the Cross. Now the doctrine of the Atonement goes with the doctrine of sin. If sin is only undeveloped good, then I dare say that kind of Atonement would be quite enough; but I plead with you men here, if you woke up to find something terrible on your conscience; if you felt like a poor man who came to see me yesterday, and said, "Bishop, if you only knew what my life had been, you would know that I cannot be forgiven"—I should not know what to say if the Atonement was only a beautiful act of self-sacrifice. But I believe this, that the need was so desperate, the sinfulness of sin so awful, so absolutely unforgiveable in itself (and why should it be forgiven? You cannot undo it. If I am speaking to one of you, my brothers, who has this on his conscience, you cannot undo the injury to that young man or woman ten or fifteen years ago; you cannot untell that lie that broke the heart of your friend), "the burden of it so intolerable," as the Prayer Book says, that the Eternal SON of GOD saw that the only chance for us sinners was to come down and make an Atonement Himself; that the broken law of righteousness must be perfectly fulfilled by some one, unless the moral standard of the universe was to go down, and that therefore JESUS CHRIST gave us a perfect example, lived out to the very death, of what a perfect life should be. And what we watch on Good Friday, and through Holy Week up to Good

Friday, is the perfect satisfaction worked out by the Eternal Son of God of the eternal law of righteousness that we poor sinners may be forgiven; and that if we are joined to Jesus Christ it is not enough to say "I believe"; it means leaving the sin which crucified Him. If we are joined to Jesus Christ and plead His perfect Atonement, then, thank God, we can be forgiven for Jesus Christ's sake. I would not part with that belief for anything in the whole world. How can I preach to East London, to North London, and West London the forgiveness of sin, if I have nothing but a good example of a good man to point my people to? And therefore to-day, and after praying together as we have done to God, I come here to proclaim to every sinner, as I proclaimed to that man speaking to me last week, "You need not despair"; "God shall forgive thee all but thy despair." There is not a man here who, if he has been a drunkard, if he has been a selfish wretched fellow who has made his home miserable—and how many men do that!—who has spent his wages on himself, and left his poor children to drag along in the gutter, who has made his wife miserable, who has never entered a church till this afternoon—there is no man here, I say, who has not now a chance of a new life, because Jesus Christ died for him on the Cross. And therefore I believe—and would not part with that belief for anything—what I understand to be the doctrine of the Atonement handed down from age to age and enshrined in the New Testament.

(5) And then one more point—and then we will try to bring it home to Bow—and it is this: I do not understand where the hope comes in in the New Theology. However much you may soften down the

point, if the last that was seen of JESUS CHRIST was in the grave, if, when He was put in the grave on Easter Eve, He never rose again, if as the poet so pathetically says—

> upon His grave in the far Syrian town
> . . . the silent stars look down,

then I should like to know, first of all, where GOD was, and, secondly, where we are.

Where was GOD? If that was the end of JESUS CHRIST, then another martyr died in this world unhelped by GOD, and there is no sign that God is going to help any one. JESUS CHRIST was another martyr who was left to die in darkness and pain, and His death is another ground of accusation against the justice of GOD. But if, as I believe, He bowed His meek head to mortal pain for a time for us men and our salvation, if He emptied Himself of His glory voluntarily in order to do this for us, if He on Easter Day, by the power of the FATHER, rose from the grave and said on Easter morning, "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death," then I have got a gospel of victory, then I have got a gospel of hope; that great enemy Sin and that great enemy Death were met in fair fight and were conquered by JESUS CHRIST, and GOD is victorious. And you and I can hope, and we can go on working in the hope that nothing that we do for GOD will not be blessed by Him; and that our work here is not hopeless, because we have the victorious GOD, Who has conquered death and sin, behind us every day.

II. "Well, now," you say, "that is all to a certain extent interesting, but what has that to say to us men with our difficult work from morning till night in Bow?"

(1) Well, first of all, I think I can carry you all with me when I say this: It is everything to know what is the character of GOD. When I kneel down in the morning for my prayers, to plead for grace to do my work—and I have to pray as hard as any of you—we are all on the same level; and I do devoutly hope every brother here kneels down at the beginning of the day, and looks for help to the one place, for there is no other—when I kneel down my greatest comfort is this, that JESUS CHRIST said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the FATHER." And, therefore, in this sacrifice of JESUS CHRIST GOD has shown Himself a real Father. You would not think much of a father down here in East London who never sacrificed himself for his children; you would not think much of a father who said he loved his children very much, but was one of those men of whom I spoke just now who spent ten shillings out of twenty-five shillings on himself! That is not the kind of father's love we understand. I say that to you and me, having to work every day, with difficulties to contend with, and depending upon GOD's help in prayer, it makes all the difference what GOD is like. And, therefore, because the FATHER Who calls you in the Mission is the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and because He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten SON, He is a FATHER to Whom we can pray with all our hearts.

(2) And then, again, this comes home to Bow, because there must be many sinners in Bow. I believe myself that it is only when any one is really stricken with the sense of sin that he appreciates a SAVIOUR. I remember a man to whom I was speaking about the Good Shepherd once said, "I quite understand, Mr. Ingram; the more a man sins the better GOD likes

him." I said, "My good man, who has taught you the Gospel?" He had got hold of this notion at the end of some mission sermon, and he had apparently carried away from the mission the idea that GOD liked forgiving a good big sinner, and he felt he was that. Now do let us remember—because this is what leads to people cursing and misrepresenting the Gospel of CHRIST—that in every act of sin and every thought of sin we are "crucifying JESUS CHRIST afresh and putting Him to an open shame." Do remember what forgiveness cost. "Behold the LAMB of GOD that taketh away the sins of the world." Yes, behold the LAMB of GOD, and *what it cost Him* to take away the sins of the world. I wish I could speak to you one by one that you might tell me frankly what was your trouble or difficulty; I may not speak to you for years again. What is it between you and GOD? Be quite honest, be frank with GOD. Is it some secret sin which is eating out your life, draining away your strength? Is it some horrible secret that no one knows? Is it that you are not honest at your work? Is it that you tell lies? Is it that you really drink more than you ought? Then I say look at the Cross; on the crucified SAVIOUR there is the mark of your sin. "The more a man sins the better GOD likes him!" Oh brothers, you who preach the Gospel, never let us preach such a Gospel as that.

(3) And then again it means that, if we understand it, in the sacrifice of GOD we have the brightest inspiration we shall ever have to a life of self-sacrifice ourselves. What are you doing down here to help your brothers? I am certain of this, that neither church nor chapel will convert East London if simply the ministers are left to do the work. We can lead, but we were always meant to have

every converted man a soldier in the army. It is the men of East London who can convert East London, and no one else. Thank God, the women can help us, and they often shame us by what they do. We are too apt to leave religion to the women and children.

God wants you as well as your wife and children, and He wants your help. Just think what good you could do up in the factory or in the workshop; how you could stand up and see that the boys did not have that filthy language used in their presence. What an example you could set yourself in not allowing the talk that demoralises young souls so often in great gatherings of men!—I speak what I know. Think what you could do by saying a word to the boy or young fellow next you at work who is showing the first signs of going wrong, what good you could do if on Sunday you came to this parish church of yours or to whatever church it is to which you belong, and set an example before the world as a man of God who did not mind showing his colours. What work you could do by bringing some one with you every time! I am more and more impressed by this: that we have to convert men one by one. I never grudge any time for individuals, because souls are only saved one by one. What work you could do by banding yourselves in this district into such an institution as the Church of England Men's Society! It is wonderful what those thirty thousand men are doing already, and I should like to see all the men's organisations acting with the Church down here becoming branches of the Church of England Men's Society. In Hackney it was this Society which got together the great service for men, and I shook hands with fifteen secretaries from

fifteen parishes of the branches who had worked up the meeting. If we can only in a brotherly spirit work together, there is nothing we cannot do. I want to have East London what it ought to be—a standing example of what a kingdom of GOD should be.

And so I leave the great message with you. I preach the old theology, I preach the old Gospel; I plead that GOD so loved the world that He gave His only begotten SON, Whom you watch in Holy Week and Good Friday going to His death. Though we have not yet got to the bottom of all that the Eternal SON did for us, we know that at least He purchased for us pardon and grace. "He that spared not His own SON, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Go forward then with a new Hope to your work.

Restored, redeemed, forgiven,
Through JESU's precious blood,
Heirs of His home in Heaven,
O praise our pardoning GOD;
Praise Him in tuneful measures,
Who gave His SON to die;
Praise Him Whose sevenfold treasures
Enrich and sanctify.

Bow

SUNDAY EVENING

XVII

THE CALL TO THE MIND

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in CHRIST JESUS: Who, being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant."

PHILIPPIANS ii. 5–7.

WE have heard the Call of the FATHER all through this Lent. I have claimed to do nothing whatever except to go through this great district as GOD's minister and call the children home; to sound the Call of the FATHER in Shoreditch, Hackney, Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, Stepney, and now, for the last time, in Bow. And we have heard the FATHER call His children in different ways. In Hackney He called to their Conscience—"Adam, where art thou?" Adam was hiding under the trees; he was excusing himself, as it is quite possible some in this church are, saying: "I have no time"; "I am not built that way"; "My wife and children go to church"; "Religion is out of date

now"—those thin trees through which GOD can see so easily, and through which every one except ourselves can see. Then came the Call of the FATHER to the Will—"LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?" St. Paul was not converted till he had said that. Not feeling, but will was what mattered. "My son, give Me thy heart," was the Call of the FATHER in Bethnal Green. How glorious that He wants our love! I do not know anything which ought to fill us with trembling awe so much as thinking that the Almighty FATHER thirsts for my love and your love, and is not satisfied till He receives it. He so loved the world that He sent His only begotten SON to win your love. The Call of the FATHER in Stepney was for the bodies of His children, those bodies which have no sin at all in themselves. There is nothing wicked but a wicked will, and the Call of the FATHER is to have handed back to Him, pure and stainless, the bodies of His children. And now tonight what is the Call of the FATHER? He calls for the Minds of His children. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in CHRIST JESUS: Who, being in the form of GOD, thought it not *a prize* (R.V.) to be equal with GOD: but made Himself of no reputation."

Now I am not going to delay the Mission by speaking again of the difference between the Old and the New Theology. I would only say this: we have to part company with St. Paul when we give up the glorious truth, which was to him the most inspiring truth of his religion, that the Eternal SON of GOD left His FATHER's side to save mankind. I remember once in those Bethnal Green days arguing with a Unitarian before two hundred men as to whether he or I were in agreement with St. Paul, and I remember that the men who listened were perfectly

convinced of this, that, right or wrong, the teaching of the Church on this point was the teaching of St. Paul. "GOD sent forth His SON made of a woman, made under the law." "JESUS CHRIST, Who, though He was rich, yet for our sake became poor." (When was He ever rich as a man? Never. He must have been speaking of some richness in another world.) "JESUS CHRIST, through Whom are all things." In another epistle: "JESUS CHRIST declared to be the SON of GOD with power"—all these passages occur in the four undisputed epistles of St. Paul. I want then to press my text home, by GOD's good grace, until the mind of every man, woman, and child here is handed over to GOD the FATHER like the mind of JESUS CHRIST. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in CHRIST JESUS," and nothing short of that. And therefore, on this last night of the Mission Call, I want to think over with you what there was about the mind of JESUS CHRIST which made it the exact pattern of what the mind of GOD's child ought to be; for GOD will never be satisfied until He has in Bow all His children reflecting the mind of JESUS CHRIST.

(1) Now what was the first leading characteristic of the mind of JESUS CHRIST? Its perfect purity. Perhaps some of you on a holiday have come across a mountain lake, perfectly reflecting in its limpid purity the mountains which surround it. I have sometimes in Switzerland, in my old climbing days, come across such a lake, and there mirrored in the lake were the spotless snow-capped mountains which surrounded the lake. That was exactly what the mind of JESUS CHRIST was like. "The wisdom that was from above was first pure," without a speck. We will see presently whether that can be said of the mind of GOD's children down here.

(2) Then, secondly, the mind of JESUS CHRIST was absolutely and entirely humble. You know we get too much accustomed to the Gospel story; if there was a sight which must have sent a thrill of admiration, and probably even almost of horror, through the ranks of the watching angels, it must have been when the Eternal SON of GOD knelt down to wash the feet of Judas. They saw the supreme Captain of the heavenly Host, with all power in Heaven, dressed like a slave washing the feet of Judas. Tell we whether anybody ought to be proud or conceited on earth after that! There was a most perfect humility displayed by the mind of JESUS CHRIST. Emptying Himself of His glory, He became a man —that was not enough; He took the form of a slave—that was not enough; He humbled Himself to death—that was not enough; He humbled Himself to death *on the Cross*. The mind of JESUS was absolutely and entirely humble. That is the second point.

(3) The mind of the LORD JESUS was perfectly loving. If you watch this week you will see numbers of little loving things that JESUS CHRIST does. You would hardly notice them perhaps if you did not watch very carefully. He tries to save Judas from himself. He says, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" He tries to appeal to the good there was in Judas. He gives St. Peter a look. He tries to get the disciples out of harm's way, when He was Himself betrayed and arrested: "Let them go, they have done no harm." As the nails go through His hands and feet, He says, "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The mind of our SAVIOUR was perfectly loving, and never does it come out more than in the awful and blessed week that begins on Palm Sunday.

Ride on, ride on, in majesty,
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain,—
Then take, O LORD, Thy power and reign!

(4) The mind of JESUS CHRIST was quite resigned to the will of God, in the fourth place. He had to struggle; He was real man as well as very GOD. That agony in Gethsemane was no make-believe. He felt it all coming over Him, the sin of the world and the awful ignominy and shame of the morrow; but He said over and over again—and what a lesson this is when we have to submit our wills to the will of God!—"Not My will, but Thine be done"; "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." He prayed for that; we may pray for that: "If it be possible, let this cancer be cured"; "If it be possible, let that poor wife of mine be spared"; "If it be possible, spare my little child"—"Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." The mind of JESUS CHRIST was wholly conformed to the will of His FATHER Which is in Heaven.

(5) Fifthly—and then we shall turn to ourselves—JESUS CHRIST's mind from the moment that He left Heaven saying, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD!" to when He flung back His head on the Cross, as we shall see on Good Friday, and said, "It is finished," was actively unselfish all the time; He was always thinking how much good He could do. He was waiting for the woman of Samaria by the well to be ready for her; He knew He would meet that young man, and "beholding him loved him," and He tried to save him from himself. It is just the same to-day. He brought you here to-night. Your friend said, "Let us go and hear the Bishop

to-night," or "Come round to the old church to-night for a change." You thought you would come, but it was not your friend that brought you. JESUS CHRIST knows you by name, and it was by His influence working through your friend that for the first time for six months, a year, or perhaps many years, you are listening to the Call of the FATHER to-night.

II. Now the question is: Are our minds like the mind of JESUS CHRIST? The FATHER, as He called our conscience, our will, our hearts, and our bodies, asks for our minds to-night, that we may hand them back to Him to be His own for ever. And we have not come home till we do. That is the point. If the mind is left out, the child has not come back.

(1) And first of all let us take the purity of the mind of JESUS CHRIST; and I look round the great family of the children of GOD here, and I speak as an elder brother (to most of you), and I say: Is your mind pure? What are the things of which you think when you are by yourself? What are the things to which your mind naturally turns? What are the stories that you read in the paper? What are the books that you read? What is the conversation you listen to? I know full well there are some of you poor girls, working in some factory perhaps or laundry, where you cannot get out of the language; and some of you boys are in places—for I have spoken to many of you in the old days—where you would give anything if you had not to hear that filthy talk which you must hear every day. I used to keep this question for the men's service, but I have had during the last fifteen years such revelations of how even young girls' minds can be depraved that I ask that question for you to answer to GOD the

FATHER to-night, both men and women, boys and girls: How can you serve GOD, how can you be happy in your FATHER's home, how can you look up untroubled into your FATHER's face, if your mind is being degraded and demoralised by your own act or if you are tainting your imagination with horrible stories and filthy pictures or listening to talk that no decent boy or girl should ever willingly listen to at all? And I do plead to-day, as the first part of the answer of the mind, that you will hand that mind back to GOD pure; that you will think on "whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, whatsoever things are pure." There are plenty of good stories to read, plenty of good honest fun in the world, plenty of merriment when friend meets friend, pure, innocent, and good. Feed on those things, read those things, fill the mind with some honest interest, fling yourself into some work for GOD; let the expulsive power of a new force take hold of you. If you want to clean a vessel, you pour clean water into it; and so pour clean water into the vessel of your mind and drive the filth away. Then you will take the first step to make the mind, like JESUS CHRIST's mind, something that can purely reflect the heights of the holiness of GOD.

(2) Then, secondly, is your mind humble? There is as much conceit in East London as there is in West London. The most conceited man I know is the man who has one accomplishment. He seems to think, because he can do this one thing very well, that he is quite perfect. I wonder whether any of you are like that. Because you are a good hand in the boot trade, or are very clever at that particular bit of the business in the workshop, you forget how much there is to know. You forget that, compared with

hundreds and thousands of others, you are a very small person. People compare themselves with one another, contrast themselves with some man or woman they know, whereas what we have to say to one another is this, and remind ourselves very often, "What hast thou that thou hast not received? and if thou hast received it, why boastest thou as if thou hadst not received it?" One of the reasons why so many men to-day—and it applies also, I am sorry to say, to women—disregard and even despise the Christian faith is because they are so conceited; they are so proud, they think they can save themselves; they do not want to be beholden to anybody; and GOD the FATHER will never be able to call them home until they have either humbled themselves, or have had their pride, by some misfortune, crushed out of them. Therefore what I plead for to-night is this second characteristic of the mind of JESUS CHRIST, perfect humility, a humble heart to remember how very poor people we really are, dependent every moment on the hand of GOD, and that if many another man had had our chance what a much better person he would have probably been.

(3) Then, thirdly, is your mind a loving one, or are you one of those people who by their atrocious temper make their home miserable and then lay the blame on other people? When you come to a miserable home you find over and over again the person, whether man or woman, who by their temper or their irritability are really making that home miserable, always making out that it is some other person's fault. Now I do want this Mission to leave the homes in Bow and Bromley more loving than they were before the Mission came; and it cannot be so unless the mind of every one who hears the Call of the FATHER becomes loving like the

mind of JESUS CHRIST. Do begin with yourself. It is so easy to apply a sermon to some one else. I heard of a wife once who said she always took home to her husband what she called the "cutting bits." Now what you have got to do is to take the cutting bits to yourselves personally; and I preach this to myself before I preach it to you. Am I loving, am I trying to set an example of real love? "Love suffereth long and is kind, love envieth not, love boasteth not itself, is not puffed up, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil." Read over on your knees yourselves, when you get home, the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and you will see what love has to do. Do pray to-day, if temper is your special fault, that your mind may after to-night be a loving mind, that can forgive and forget, and care for others.

(4) Then, fourthly, are you resigned to the will of GOD? It does not mean at all—and that is the common mistake about the Catechism—that you are not perfectly justified in struggling to put yourself in a better position than you are. It is one of the striking things about East London Church work that as people are more religious they get on better. Over and over again they get stronger characters, and therefore you find one church alone in East London which loses a hundred communicants every single year, because as they come nearer to GOD so they gain stronger characters, and they get on in their business and move away from the district, because their religion has been a strength to them, and people have trusted them more. The old Catechism says "that we are to do our duty in that state of life in which it *shall* please GOD to call us," not "in which it *has* pleased GOD to call us." Do not misunderstand that. What, on the other hand, we are forbidden to have is that

grumbling, carping temper which is always complaining that we are not richer than we are; that we have trouble and other people have not. I do ask that, as you watch JESUS CHRIST in Holy Week saying "Not My will, but Thine be done," you will pray for His spirit of resignation to the will of GOD. And, if your faith is weak because you cannot understand everything—remember St. Paul says himself, "We know in part." How can our finite minds understand everything? And it is part of a humble mind to accept what truth it understands and to receive by faith other truths which are revealed even if it cannot fully understand them. These things are hidden from the wise and prudent and they are revealed unto babes.

(5) Fifthly and lastly. Are we, like JESUS CHRIST, actively unselfish? I want to see East London turned into a beautiful kingdom of GOD; I want to see—and we can see it, there is no reason why East London should not be as good a place as any other part of London or the world—I want to see the beautiful laws of GOD's kingdom governing East London. It can be only by the active unselfishness of those who do believe. What are you doing towards it? What have you done during the last month for other people? Can you name a single thing that you have done from pure unselfishness for other people? If there has been nothing, then you have not yet got the mind of JESUS CHRIST. JESUS CHRIST is always working for others; "Work," He cries, "for the night cometh when no man can work." The fifth thing, then, which you must pray for to-night is the actively unselfish mind of JESUS CHRIST.

Now the question is, how we are to receive it. I want to preach the old theology, and that is that only JESUS CHRIST by His SPIRIT can give us His

mind. It always seems to me, to take an illustration which will be perfectly plain to every one here, that it is very much like taking a photograph. You put the instrument in position before the face, you contemplate the face, you see that it is in position, you prepare the plate very carefully to receive the face, and then you have to trust to the light to do the rest, and the face is printed on the plate. Do you want to be like JESUS CHRIST? You have to do what the photographer has to do. You have to get yourself steadily in position that you may see the Face, and you have to prepare the heart very carefully in all those ways of which I have spoken; you must wash away anything that will stain the plate, and then you must pray to the SPIRIT of light, the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, to do the rest. It is an act of faith as the photograph is an act of faith. Therefore what I plead for is that you shall endeavour to photograph the face of JESUS CHRIST on your mind, and so conform your mind to the mind of JESUS CHRIST. And there is no time when we can do it better than this week.

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

I have said once, and I say again, If a man believes that the Eternal SON of GOD died on the Cross, he cannot be proud, he cannot go back and be a conceited man; you cannot go back and keep on that guilty friendship which you will not break; you cannot go back and let your imagination and your mind feed on the garbage of the streets; you cannot go back and be the selfish, ill-tempered man or woman you have been for years. And there is only one thing that can

change your heart, and that is the Cross of JESUS CHRIST brought home to you by the SPIRIT of GOD. Do then hand yourselves over to the HOLY SPIRIT that He may take of CHRIST this week and bring Him home to you. How are you going to spend Good Friday? In some amusement? No, you cannot do that, if you believe in the Cross of JESUS CHRIST. I pray, and we will pray together, that by a real effort the Call of the FATHER may reach our minds to-night, and that we may hand those minds back, the pure, humble, loving, resigned, unselfish minds that the FATHER longs to have. And if we make that attempt the HOLY SPIRIT will help us. It will mean a change of life, a change of temper; it will mean coming to church; it will mean worshipping God; it will mean an unselfish witness that will win hundreds of others; but above all, it will mean a mind at peace with GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Bow

WEDNESDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The first question relates to something which I said some nights ago. "In your Mission address for last week at Bethnal Green you said

'GOD'S patience is limited.'"

Well, then, the writer asks

How is that possible?

And quotes, among other passages: "He retaineth not His anger for ever."

I was preaching then on the wonderful patience of GOD, but I warned people not to presume upon it. It is quite true that GOD's patience in a sense is limited. We have no right whatever to assume that if this opportunity of to-night is cast away we ever shall have another. We are simply presuming on the patience of GOD. When you look in the Bible you find several most stern passages. There was the feast where the doors were shut, and the people came and said, "LORD, open unto us," and the answer was, "I tell you I know you not." There is no good in taking the comforting parts from the Bible and leaving out the stern ones. The New Testament is a very stern book. "Agonise to enter in at the strait gate, for broad is the way that

leadeth to destruction." And therefore while I believe in, and while I have been enlarging all through the Mission upon the beautiful patience of GOD, and how it has waited and waited year after year for some of us, yet I should not do my duty if I did not point out that you can try the patience of GOD until it is too late and the doors are shut. That is why I prayed to-night so very earnestly that not one of you present who perhaps have this last chance will presume upon the patience of GOD.

2. The next request is to

Explain the passage, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

There is not a doubt that that is one of the most mysterious and difficult passages in the Bible to explain. What I feel certain of, so far as we can feel certain of anything, is this: that our SAVIOUR in coming to rescue us from sin had, so far as it was possible for His sinless nature, to bear the penalty of sin. Now the penalty of sin is the loss of GOD. That is the great penalty of sin; to be out of the light is to be in the darkness. And, therefore, if our SAVIOUR was to bear for us the penalty of sin He must in some sense bear the loss of GOD. So it was that, although He had gone through so much, He had always had the sense of His FATHER's presence all through, but on the Cross the sensible presence of GOD was withdrawn from Him, and then it was that His most awful experience came, and He looked up and did not see His FATHER's face; it was then that the cry broke from Him, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And yet, awful as it is, it is a very comforting cry. When people feel forsaken, as they sometimes do, they must remember what Mrs. Browning so beautifully says:

> It went up from the holiest lips,
> Amid His lost creation,
> That of the lost no son should use
> Those words of desolation.

And if you are going through that awful trial of feeling that God has forsaken you, there is nothing more comforting than the thought that our Saviour endured that very same feeling; but He still said through the darkness, "*My* God, *My* God"—He knew that God was His God, though He did not feel His presence. When, therefore, I find people in trouble, desolation, or doubt, this cry from the Cross comforts them more than anything else.

3. Then, again, I am asked by one young man who was present on Sunday afternoon

Why is gambling wrong?

I warned those present on Sunday against gambling as well as against drink, and this young man, who may be present perhaps in church, wants to know why gambling is wrong. Well, now, in the first place, gambling is really selfish. In gambling you are trying to get something for nothing, and you have only to see the restless spirit of the gambler to know it is wrong. You may say that you only gamble in a very small way. When a man begins to gamble he may not be able to stop himself. You notice how restless the confirmed gambler is. I do not think that any single thing more unsettles a man for honest, straightforward work than gambling. Then what do you gamble for? It is only to get something, if possible, out of some one else for nothing. Therefore inherently, before you weigh what the result is, gambling is founded on a wrong principle. Then, secondly, undoubtedly gambling is inflaming into a tyranny something which is a passion, but which we have to hold in check, and that is the passion of getting. Gambling—and this is very well put by the present head master of Eton in a little pamphlet which he wrote on gambling—even for small sums is a rubbing up and irritating of something within us that we have to hold down. The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, we are told, and there is not the slightest doubt about it that it is one of those things that even in good

men, once they give it a start, seems to get a most extraordinary hold on them, dragging down their characters altogether. Then you may say, "But I am talking of a little gambling, putting a little money on a horse, and so on." And it is quite true that a little poison may be taken without apparent harm. You do not feel the result of it on a diminutive scale, but if you go into one of our prisons you will find whole wards full of men—and young men especially—who are there simply and solely from dishonesty caused by trying to pay their gambling debts. You would see on a large scale how the poison spreads, although it is quite true, as a judge told me only this week, that he did not think it was true to say that it brought so many cases into the courts as drink, yet we have it both from our judges and the heads of our prisons that next to drink gambling is the greatest curse of to-day—and I may add that the encouraging of it by advertising odds is one of the curses of to-day, and it ought to be in a far stronger way put down by the arm of the law. But for you, my brother, who asked the question, believe me it is the message of the Mission to stop the very beginning of gambling, and it will have done a better turn by you than any other message could have done you if it accomplishes this.

4. Then I am asked a question which I have been asked once or twice before with regard to the terrible suffering of animals. The writer can understand human suffering, but

Why do animals suffer at all?

I do not pretend to be able to answer every question, and there is not the slightest doubt that the whole question of suffering is a very great mystery and difficulty. Even of human suffering Mrs. Hamilton King says: "We suffer; why we suffer, that is hid with God's fore-knowledge in the clouds of Heaven!" And there is no doubt that the animal creation is bound to us in some mysterious way, and shares our sufferings and our sorrows. St. Paul says: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

But, on the other hand, when I turn to the animal creation and ask the naturalists, who know it best, about it, they all tell me that the animal creation on the whole is a very happy creation—that the rabbit, for instance, outside the wood on a summer's evening has no consciousness of the fact that it may be shot in a few moments; the swallows wheeling in the sunshine have no consciousness of the death which is approaching; they have no self-consciousness or power of looking forward. What so often causes unhappiness to the animals is the thoughtlessness of man. From my experience of the London streets I think that people on the whole—I don't say all—are very kind to their horses; but there is no doubt that we ought by our public opinion to see that no animal should be unnecessarily hurt at all. And, therefore, because they are dumb, and because they are in our care, and because they are joined to us in a kind of sympathy of suffering, let us resolve—and I am glad to be asked this question because it gives me an opportunity of saying this—that, so far as we can, the animal creation which comes under our own care is saved from unnecessary pain.

5. I have just had a question put into my hand.

In view of the present-day attitude of many ministers to the Bible, as in the treatment of Genesis as a myth, and the account of the Fall as an allegory, what are we to do with the Bible?

Of course, we must not be narrow-minded. There is a very ignorant kind of way in which people might say, "Oh, I will not listen to any new lights at all"—to insist, for instance, as a matter of life and death and salvation, that the world was made in six literal days instead, perhaps, of æons of ages. Those six days may be any length at all. I do hope—for I cannot go into all the difficulties of the Bible account—that you will join a Bible-class held by some intelligent and well-read man and have these things explained to you. Take another so-called difficulty: the fact, for instance, that a book in the Bible is discovered to belong to

a later date to what it was once supposed to be: this has nothing to do with the Christian faith; it is the *men* who were inspired. God breathed into the man who wrote the book, not into the book. Therefore, while I hold entirely by what I said on Sunday with regard to the Old and the New Theology, do not let us by our action be so foolish and narrow-minded and ignorant as to produce a reaction the other way.

6. **Why are there no missionary prayers in the Prayer Book?**

It is quite true that when the Prayer Book was put together the Church's conscience was not alive as it is to-day on missionary work. There are, of course, one or two beautiful collects, as, for instance, the one for Good Friday: "Bring them home, blessed Lord, to Thy flock," etc. But I frankly admit that we ought to have in our Common Prayer more attention paid to the great work which lies upon the Church of converting the world. I am always willing to sanction any missionary prayers being used, and have sanctioned them all over the diocese, and in every one of the monthly intercession papers issued with the Diocesan Magazine you will always find that the intercessions, which I draw up every month with the help of others, comprise some missionary prayers. But at the time of the Prayer Book being put together the Church's conscience was not so much alive on this point as it is to-day.

7. Then our friend from Hackney asks me a question about the soul. He was not quite satisfied with my answer on the former occasion. He was quite right to say what he did to his secularist friend.

"Am I right in saying we are immaterial and immortal spirits?"

That is just the answer I told you to give. You are quite right. "We are spirits" is a truer way of putting it than to

say "We have souls." When a man speaks of having a soul he has not got quite the right idea. We *are* immortal spirits who are living in bodies, and that immortal spirit passes from here to the other world; and five minutes after death we are just the same as five minutes before death.

Then come a number of questions with regard to the Holy Communion; they are answered in the course of the following sermon:—

8. **"How was it that JESUS CHRIST called the bread and the wine His Body and His Blood, when He had not been crucified? I am in great distress; this is a stumbling-block to me."**

9. **Why do the priests call the holy table the "altar" if it is not so called in the Prayer Book?**

10. **"I do not know which is right—the High or the Low Church—about the Holy Communion."**

11. Then in a more carefully written letter:—

"Will you kindly explain the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist? I always read all I can on the subject, but I cannot get a very clear idea of it."

BOW

WEDNESDAY EVENING

XVIII

HOLY COMMUNION

"And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you."

ST. LUKE xxii. 19, 20.

I AM going to show you to-night, with GOD's help, first of all what CHRIST says, and then what any Jew would have understood to be the meaning of His words. Then I am going to read you what I think will interest you very much, and which some of you never had perhaps the time to see—an account of the Holy Communion service one hundred and fifty years after JESUS CHRIST had ascended back to Heaven. Then I am going to see what it is to us, and why it is the ideal and glorious Response to make on the last night of the Mission.

(1) First of all, we take the SAVIOUR's own blessed words. Of course, these words are recorded for us

in more than one place, but I take the account which seems to me clearest and plainest :—

"And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you : this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you."—ST. LUKE xxii. 19, 20.

The other Gospels give almost exactly the same words. That is what the SAVIOUR said Himself; it was not invented by the Church or any Council of the Church. And the first thing I would say about it is this. How very natural that the end of all this should be a feast! Do you remember the prodigal son coming back? He has been in our minds all through this Lent. It was not enough to put the ring on him, and the robe, but the father, in his delight and happiness, said : "Bring forth the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat it : for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found." Therefore the feast of love comes so naturally at the close of the prodigal's return.

(2) Now the second point is, What would a Jew have naturally understood by the words which I have read? I have copied down some words written by Dr. Robertson Smith, who is the great authority on the religion of the Semites, of which the Jews, of course, were part, and he says : "The fundamental idea of sacrifice is not that of sacred tribute, but a communion between the GOD and His worshippers, by joint participation in the living flesh and blood of a sacred victim."* In other words, this man, who has investigated the whole religion of the race to which

* "Religion of the Semites," pp. 327, 418.

the Jews belong, lays down that all through the early sacrifices the fundamental idea of sacrifice was "a communion between the GOD and His worshippers by joint participation in the living flesh and blood of a sacred victim." Consequently when any Jew heard our LORD use those words, his idea would be that he was to be partaker by eating and the drinking of the life of a Person, and that the life of the Person on Whom he was to feed was to enter into him. He would have understood in that sense, and in that sense only, "This is My body, this is My blood."

(3) Then I look to see what St. Paul thought. You must always remember that St. Paul comes in as an additional witness. He was not one of those who went up and down with JESUS CHRIST, nor was he one of the little body of disciples when JESUS CHRIST said these words. Here was a man, the ablest man of the day, who had been converted by the appearance to him of the living CHRIST. Afterwards this is what he said: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of CHRIST? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of CHRIST?" Just as on Sunday we saw that St. Paul's view of CHRIST is the view that we hold to-day, namely, that He was the Eternal SON of GOD, so we hold identically the same view as St. Paul with regard to the Holy Communion. For instance, a questioner presses us with a question: "How can it be the body and the blood of CHRIST, and in what sense?" I take the words quoted by the Bishop of Birmingham, in a book called "The Body of CHRIST," from St. Athanasius: "It is the very body and blood in which CHRIST lived and died, rose and ascended, only bestowed on us in a spiritual and Heavenly manner, the same body,

but not now in material particles, but in spiritual principles and virtues." That was the idea of the early fathers which carried out the precise idea which the Jews would have naturally understood the words to convey, and which is borne out by what is said in the Gospels and in the epistles of St. Paul.

(4) Now I turn to what I think will interest you very much, the account given by Justin Martyr, one hundred and fifty years after our LORD was on earth, of the manner in which the Holy Communion was celebrated in his time :—

"After we have thus bathed the person who has become a believer and an adherent, we lead him to the 'brethren,' as they are called, where they are assembled to offer up common prayers earnestly on behalf of themselves and the newly enlightened one, and all others everywhere, that it may be vouchsafed to us who have learnt the truth to be found in our conduct good members of the Society and keepers of the Commandments that we may be saved with the eternal salvation. Then when we have done our prayers we greet one another with a kiss. Then there is presented to the president of the brethren a loaf and a cup of water and wine, and he, after taking them, offers up praise and glory to the FATHER of all things through the name of the SON and the HOLY SPIRIT, and he gives thanks (eucharist) at length for these favours of GOD to us. And when he has ended the prayers and the thanksgiving, the whole assistant people assent with an Amen, a Hebrew word meaning So be it. And when the president has given thanks and the whole people has assented, those who are called deacons (ministers) among us give a portion of the loaf and wine and water over which the thanksgiving has been made to each of those who are

present, and they take it away to those who are not. And this food is called among us Eucharist, and no one is allowed to partake of it unless he believes that what we teach is true and has been washed in the laver for the remission of sins for regeneration, and is living as CHRIST enjoined. For we do not receive these things as common bread or common drink, but just as JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR, by the word of GOD, made flesh, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so we have been taught that the food over which thanks has been given by the word of prayer which comes from Him, that food from which our flesh and blood are by assimilation nourished, is both the flesh and the blood of that JESUS Who was made flesh." *

Now what I want you to see is this, that this same conception of the Gospels, the same idea of St. Paul, the same idea which would have been accepted by the Jews was exactly the idea of the second century. Bread is produced, wine and water, and the president offers up prayers and thanksgiving according to his power, and the distribution and participation by each of the brethren takes place, and it is sent away to those who are not present by the hands of the deacons.

(5) Then we come over all those centuries down to our own Prayer Book. Do we find any difference? We find precisely the same doctrine about the Holy Communion in the Prayer Book. We are told in the Catechism that the child is to be asked: "What is the inward thing signified?" and the answer is, "The Body and the Blood of CHRIST which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the LORD'S supper." So that you see

* Justin Martyr, "Apol.," i. 65, 66.

—and I go into these things, which, of course, are known to many of you, simply in order to clear away any doubts from those who have not had any time to study the question—that the doctrine held by the Church of England to-day is precisely the same about the Holy Communion which has come down through all these ages to our own time.

What then comes out of all this?

(1) First of all, that the Holy Communion is not a mere memorial feast. It is something more than that. It is not as if we were keeping a service in memory of Shakespeare. We might have a memorial feast in memory of some great man who has gone from us; it would be a memorial feast and no more. But it is not the doctrine of the Church of England that the Holy Communion is a mere memorial feast. So again the gift in the Holy Communion—what I am saying is held as strongly by all the Evangelicals in my diocese as by the High Churchmen—is not created by the hand of faith. The hand of faith takes the gift, and the gift is placed in the hand of faith, but you must not say the hand of faith created the gift. It is an objective gift which is received by faith; and when our questioner asked that almost simple question, "I want to know which is right, the High Church or the Low Church," the answer is that both are right. You want the hand of faith at the same time as you want the Divine gift. And there is no contradiction whatever between the faith that receives and the gift that is placed in the hand of faith; and it is time that this old dispute should come to an end. There is no good for ever saying: "I will believe one and not the other." What we have to believe is both, that we have to put up the child's hand of faith and believe that in that hand is placed

what is described in our Prayer Book as "the Body and Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

(2) Then you say, "In what sense is the Holy Communion then a sacrifice?" I am going to say something which may surprise you, but there have been so many mistakes made on this point that I want to be quite clear: there is not a clergyman in the diocese of London who believes, or who teaches, that you *repeat* the sacrifice of CHRIST in the Holy Communion. It is a popular misrepresentation of what is really believed, which is that in the Holy Communion we *plead* the one sacrifice made upon the Cross. This is expressed in that beautiful hymn:

> Look, FATHER, look on His anointed face,
> And only look on us as found in Him;
> Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
> Our prayer so languid and our faith so dim;
> For lo! between our sins and their reward
> We set the Passion of Thy SON our LORD.

What we express in that familiar, well-known Eucharistic hymn is exactly what is in the mind of any one who speaks of the Holy Communion as a sacrifice—we are pleading the sacrifice, and nothing else. And, as the Archbishop of York says in a pamphlet on the subject: "Just as Joseph's brethren showed the blood-stained coat to Joseph's father, so we point to the tokens of the sacrifice of our Lord, and say, 'Look, FATHER, on this, and for His sake pardon our sins.'" It is in this sense that the Holy Communion is a sacrifice, and becomes a beautiful intercession service, the great prayer service of the Church.

(3) And so, again, there are some people who seem to think it is wrong to speak of the Holy Communion Service as the Eucharist, but as you saw in

those old writings I read to you, Eucharist was one of the earliest words for the great thanksgiving service of the Church. If you want, in arguing with those who disbelieve the Resurrection, to use an argument which has never been answered yet, ask your unbelieving friend this: "If the Resurrection never happened, why did those Christian people enshrine in their great service of thanksgiving the tokens of a shameful death?" Unless that shameful death was transfigured afterwards by some glorious fact like the Resurrection, never would the Christians have enshrined in their central Eucharistic service the shameful tokens of a bloody death. Therefore every time we come to the Holy Communion, we see a most striking Christian evidence of the Resurrection having taken place.

(4) And that brings us, dear people, especially those of us who have followed the Mission throughout, to the next question. Why does this constitute such a glorious end to the Mission, why is the great response to-night the most full response that we can make? What does GOD ask for? What has GOD asked for through the Mission? He asked at Hackney for our Conscience, He asked for our Will in Bethnal Green, He asked for our Heart in Whitechapel, He asked for our Bodies in Stepney, He asked for our Minds in this church on Sunday night. In the Holy Communion, at different stages of it, we are able to offer and give over each part of ourselves. In the Commandments at the beginning we search our conscience, and the Commandments are a most important part of the service; just as we examined ourselves on Sunday afternoon — have we broken the First Commandment? Have we broken the Second?—so at the Communion the Command-

ments form the penitential preparation for the service. And that is why I never allow in the diocese the Commandments to be left out. We bring our Conscience to the Holy Communion and prepare ourselves for it. Then we bring our Will. The Holy Communion is the very time to come and dedicate your Easter resolution. You mean to work for GOD, you mean to take a Bible-class, you mean never to do that sin again, you mean to be a better, a more faithful witness in the workshop, you mean to be a better-tempered woman at home, or a more helpful girl. At the Holy Communion you consecrate your resolution—"I will, GOD helping me." So again at the Holy Communion we bring our Heart. What a blessed Communion there is between JESUS and the hearts of His people! We speak to JESUS, and JESUS speaks to us.

> Grant me this, I pray,
> Ever in Thy heart to stay;
> Let me evermore abide
> In Thy heart and wounded side.

That is the loving prayer of the faithful communicant when he or she comes to meet JESUS in the Holy Communion. Then we dedicate our Bodies. The prayer in which "we offer and present . . . ourselves, our souls and bodies" is one of the most beautiful prayers of the service. And I am certain of this, that one of the reasons why these outward and visible signs were instituted was because God wanted our bodies, and wanted us to consecrate our bodies as well as our minds and souls. That is why we have the child brought at Baptism, and the water sprinkled on the forehead of the child; that is why we come at Confirmation and receive the hands on our head, be-

cause our bodies are sacred, and the religion covers the body as well as the soul. And so again how glorious a response we make to the appeal of Sunday night in bringing our mind—"that this mind be in us which was also in CHRIST JESUS," that every thought may be brought into captivity to CHRIST; that is the glorious thing that should take place in the Holy Communion.

Now it is quite clear that every single Christian was meant to be a communicant in the original invitation, which was, "Drink ye *all* of it." And in the Early Church there was not, as far as we know, a single Christian who was not a communicant—not one. It was the only service which they had, and if any one missed a certain number of Sundays, or first days of the week, by the very fact of his being away he was looked on as having cut himself off from the body of the Christian Church. We have now—have we not?—a sad falling off when we look round, and perhaps among a thousand nominal Christians in a district, perhaps fifty are regular communicants. Therefore I must say I do very greatly long to-day that the last Call of the FATHER may be a call to every one, at any rate in this church, to come back to the Communion. We find so many lapsed communicants who used to be communicants but who have given up being so now. If I am speaking to any such here to-night, what are your reasons for giving up coming to the Holy Communion? I jotted down one or two this afternoon which I thought might be keeping some of you back.

The first is, "I am not good enough." But, my friends, when you are cold do you stay away from the fire, or do you come to it? When you are cold you go to the fire to get warm. Never forget that

we hope some day to be in Heaven, and the standard of Heaven is at least as high as the standard of Holy Communion. If you are not good enough for the Holy Communion you are not good enough for Heaven. Therefore you are at present in a most inconsistent frame of mind. You would not willingly banish from yourself all hope of Heaven, and will you banish from yourself the very thing which, most on earth, if you take it in the right spirit, is able to fit you for Heaven? Do not then stay away this Easter because you think you are not good enough.

Or perhaps you say, "I do not fully understand." But is it likely you ever will? Do you suppose I fully understand the Holy Communion? Do you suppose any finite mind can understand these infinite mysteries of GOD? No. If the blind man, when he was told to go to the Pool of Siloam and wash, had said, "I am not going till I quite understand how the Pool of Siloam and the water in it is going to help me," he would have remained blind; but going in humble and childlike faith, and carrying out what he was told to do, he found his blessing. We want the same childlike faith which trusts when it does not understand.

Or perhaps you say, "Others do not." But that is the most fatal argument in the world. Why, perhaps you are the very man who is to bring at least twenty men back to the Communion. But, if you do not come yourself, you will never bring them. It has been beautifully said: "When the good man stops trying the world drops back like lead." We must never forget that GOD has something for each one of us to do which, if we do not ourselves do it, we can never bring others to do at all. And therefore the very fact that others do not come is all the more reason why you should.

Then, again, "It means such a change in my life." I know it does, and that is precisely why I want you to come. It is because I believe that if you made up your mind to-night, brother or sister, to be a steadfast and earnest communicant, it would make a real change in your life, that I long for you to form that resolve to-night.

And then, lastly, perhaps you say sadly, "It is too late, it is too late." Well, what do we say in the beautiful Mission hymn that we have learnt to love so much this Lent?

> The feast of joy awaits thee there,
> The precious robe and ring;
> O haste thy FATHER'S gift to share,
> O haste His praise to sing.
> Return, return.

Too late! Some day it may be too late, but it is not too late to-night. Beginning, perhaps, in the very old age of your life, you may make up by being an example of a faithful communicant during the rest of your life, for the long neglect of the past. Holy Communion may work wonders with you. You may grow so like CHRIST that you may make some amend for the neglect and carelessness of former days.

And so I come round, dear people, with a very full heart, to the very message with which I began this Mission: "Come out from the unclean thing, and I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty." Let us listen to that most loving and gracious call; let us come out from the unclean thing, accept His offer to be a Father to us, and at His blessed feast of love be children once again at home in their FATHER'S house.

St. Paul's Cathedral

EASTER DAY

XIX

THE CALL OF THE FATHER WHICH RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD

"But God raised Him from the dead."—Acts xiii. 30.

IN these simple words, repeated again and again on all possible occasions, was the great truth of Easter first preached to the world. Is St. Peter explaining on the day of Pentecost to the wondering crowd the reasons of the marvels which they saw on that day? These are the words he used: "Jesus of Nazareth God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death." Is he giving the reason why he and St. John had been able to raise the lame man from the bed where he had lain so long? This is the reason that he gave: "Ye denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted you, and killed the Prince of Life, Whom God raised from the dead." Or again, when Annas and Caiaphas were present and asked him by what power and in what name he had done this he said: "Be it known unto you all that in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even

in Him doth this man stand here before you whole." And when St. Paul takes up the wondrous tale, and is asked, as described in this chapter, in Antioch in Pisidia, whether he had any word of exhortation, there is the same cry of triumph in his story: "Though they found no cause of death in Him, yet asked they of Pilate that He should be slain, but GOD raised Him from the dead." Of course, there are many passages in which JESUS is spoken of as rising from the dead Himself. "He was buried and rose again the third day." We are to live to Him "Who died and rose again." "We believe that JESUS died and rose again." But the fact remains that in the first proclamation of the Gospel story it was GOD the FATHER Who raised JESUS from the dead; it was the Call of the FATHER which summoned back from the unseen world the spirit of JESUS. "The Resurrection was an eminent act of GOD's omnipotency," as an old writer calls it, worked before the eyes of all in Heaven and earth, and it has been and is the glory and the comfort and the hope of the world ever since.

I. And first it has been the glory. To those of us who have been sounding or hearing the Call of the FATHER all through this Lent to our consciences, our wills, our hearts, our bodies, and our minds, and have been facing every week the cries of despair from human souls in sorrow, the bitter questionings from doubters, and the deep-drawn sighs from the suffering, there has been all the time one thing which we have been wanting. Where was the *proof* that the FATHER was victoriously strong? The Jamaica earthquake? Yes, GOD allowed it, we said, for He trains His people by making them face the forces of Nature. The wreck of the *Berlin*? Yes, it was not that GOD could not control the wind and the waves, but

He allowed the laws of Nature to take their course, because to be constantly interfering to stop accidents would be contrary to the method He had apparently laid down for the best guidance of His children. "What science called the uniformity of Nature faith called the faithfulness of GOD." Yes, but why are the good so terribly ill-treated often and the wicked flourish like a green bay tree? Why should the good JESUS be hounded to His death and the lying Caiaphas and the cowardly Pilate and the jealous priests triumph? Because, we perhaps said, the good are never promised their reward in this life, and the solitary man upon the Cross is stronger in the end than the surrounding crowd. But is it not clear that all this is lacking somewhere, that it is at fault somewhere, that the explanation itself wants backbone, that it is like a story of which the central chapter is omitted, and that what we have been waiting for all through this Mission and through Lent, knowing of course it was coming, but looking forward to it as the keystone of our arch, the backbone of our justification of GOD, the crowning chapter of our story, was this great cry which, rung out by the first apostles, rings through Heaven and earth to-day: "GOD raised Him from the dead." And this is our glory to-day. There is no service in the year quite like the Easter Eucharist in St. Paul's Cathedral; and this is the spring of all the exultation: JESUS was *not* left to die by GOD unrecognised and unjustified; He was *not* left with His promises unfulfilled, and all the hopes He had raised blasted. GOD let the foes do their very worst; He let them come in like a flood and seemed to sweep JESUS away; but when the triumph seemed complete, then was GOD's opportunity, and in the teeth of

everything, in the face of the unbelief of to-day as much as of the malignity of two thousand years ago, GOD raised Him from the dead,

And now above the sky He's King, Alleluia!

And we echo on earth the triumph song of Heaven: "Worthy is the LAMB that was slain to receive glory and honour and power, that Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to GOD by Thy blood."

And then turning to GOD the FATHER we pay the same glory to Him: "Glory be to Thee, O GOD most high; we praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks unto Thee for Thy great glory, O LORD GOD, Heavenly King, GOD the FATHER Almighty." So rolls on the great Easter Eucharist.

II. But not only is that act of GOD our glory upon Easter Day; it is also our comfort. The world needs comfort. It needs comfort for its sorrow, and it needs comfort in its struggle with sin. It is only perhaps those who are brought daily into contact with sorrow who realise at all what the sorrows of this great city are. The young wife who died before the end of the first year of married life; the brother loved and trusted by mother and sisters who suddenly falls ill with fever with his regiment and passes away; the mother who has taken to drink; the widow's only child entrapped and betrayed by a wicked man; the wife whose husband is untrue to her; and the thousands of souls heart-broken with the sense of unforgiven sin—here is a tangled story of sorrow and sin, one page taken at random from the life stories of the last few weeks. What has the Easter refrain to say to the sorrow and the sin of London? "GOD raised Him from the dead." Yes, but what does that

matter? It matters everything. It is the one ground for certainty, my brother, that you will see that young wife again; JESUS has her safe in His keeping, and you will find her safe with Him in Paradise. It is the one justification for thinking—and therefore beware of those who would belittle it and explain it away—that GOD will also raise that young brother from the grave: "Thy brother shall rise again." Yes, why? Only because JESUS can say: "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." It is the one chance that that mother may yet break the chain of drink. If GOD raised JESUS from the dead and broke the chains of death, He may yet break the chain of that terrible habit and raise her from what is worse than death. It is the one standing proof for that outraged child that villainy will not triumph for ever, that the poor shall not alway be forgotten, and the patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever. And as for the penitent sinner, if GOD raised JESUS from the dead, then the strength of His absolution must avail to sweep away the sins of the world. "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees." If JESUS lay still in the grave, if there was no empty tomb, I have no comfort for you, no certainty of reunion with those you love, no triumphant expectation of the righting of wrong, no ground for hope for freedom from sin, no pledge of absolution. But lift up your heads on Easter Day: He was not left in the tomb. Lo! see the place where the LORD lay. "GOD raised Him from the dead."

III. And once again and lastly, if it is the spring of our glory and the source of our comfort, the truth of Easter Day is also the fountain of our hope; our

hope, that is, for this poor humanity which with all its faults we know and love so well. We are full of hope to-day of all that may happen, we see visions and we dream dreams, and long to make the world a better place for the children than it was for us, and sweep away the isolation between class and class, and revive the latent religion in the apparently non-religious multitude, and give every man a decent home and every child a real chance of life, and drive out the drink curse and the gambling curse and the sweating den, and make the whole round world again "bound by gold chains about the feet of GOD." And we shall find it hard enough to do it with all the faith we may have in every revealed truth of the Christian faith, but we shall never do it unless GOD raised JESUS from the dead. If the Divinity of our LORD, as Mr. Gladstone once said, is the one central hope of our poor, wayward race, it is so only because the Incarnation was crowned by the Resurrection, and it is only in the power of a risen CHRIST, Who loves each one of His people, to Whom all power is given now in Heaven and in earth, and Who, however slowly He works, never fails, that there lies the hope of a new Heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Let no doubts, then, of clever men, no plausible rewriting of old truth, no editing of an easier gospel for a sceptical age, rob us of the birthright of Easter, still the glory, still the comfort, and still the hope of the world. Wicked men put JESUS to death, but GOD raised Him from the dead. "Thanks be to GOD for His unspeakable gift."

THE END.

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